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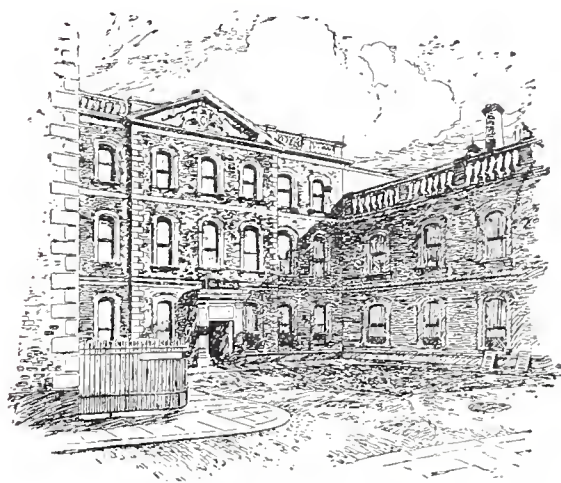




The  Times

# HISTORY OF THE WAR

VOL. XVI.



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## CHAPTER CCXXXV.

# THE RUSSIAN "PEACE."

THE LENIN ERA—MAXIMALISM OF ENDS AND OF MEANS—"NO ANNEXATION, NO INDEMNITY" FORMULA—BOLSHEVIST OFFER OF GENERAL ARMISTICE IGNORED BY ALLIES—FROM THE BREST TRUCE TO THE BREST TREATY—HERR VON KÜHLMANN AND M. TROTSKY—GERMAN CHANGE OF FRONT—THE UKRAINE AS INTERVENER—"BREAD-PEACE" WITH THE RADA—ECONOMIC TERMS OF UKRAINE TREATY—ALL-RUSSIA UNDER THE YOKE—THE BALTIC AND ITS PEOPLES—SELF-DETERMINATION—JAPAN AND SIBERIA.

THE Russian Revolution, which, since its outbreak in March, 1917, had passed from Liberal Imperialism under Prince Lvoff and M. Miliukoff through the paroxysms of neo-Radicalism as impersonated by M. Kerensky, entered upon a third phase with the advent of the Bolsheviks, under MM. Lenin and Trotsky, during the following November. In so far as these fanatics were sincere, they aspired to attain at once to a heroic maximum and to transpose at one bound not only Russia but all mankind into the seventh heaven of the Communist creed. Hypnotized by this millennium of their own imagining they shrank from no crime in order to hasten its consummation. Their theory of wholesale expropriation rapidly degenerated in practice into brigandage and murder; political opponents, like the veteran General Ivanoff, General Dukhonin, the Commander-in-Chief, General Yanushkevitch, M. Goremykin, the ex-Premier, MM. Shingareff and Kokoshkin, two former Liberal Ministers, and a host of others, were assassinated; the Church was despoiled; the Treasury was sacked; and the Constituent Assembly, which was to have decided the future governance of the Russian lands, was dispersed by armed force. The masses, still devoid of every civic sense, hailed with almost delirious enthusiasm a doctrine which they forthwith translated for

themselves into the primitive terms of "Bread, Land, and Peace." Even the Cossack proletariat became infected. General Kaledin, the Cossack Hetman, seeing his forces melt away, and with them the last hope of restoring in a near future ordered government in Russia, committed suicide in despair. What was left of the Russian classes looked on with the impassive detachment that they have always exhibited in the presence of an accomplished fact.

Peace, above all, was desired by the Bolsheviks, since without it the great experiment of Soviet rule in Russia could not be inaugurated, much less the disruption of social order the world over. One of their first public acts accordingly was to invite all the belligerents to conclude a general truce; although meeting with no response, they sought and obtained by December 15 an armistice with the enemy on the Russian and adjacent fronts. By Christmas, 1917, formal negotiations regarding the principles of a general peace had been opened, and these, upon the failure of the Allies to associate themselves with the Bolshevik action, culminated first on February 9, 1918, in a separate peace with South Russia, the Ukraine, which German diplomacy had manoeuvred into separate existence; and secondly, on the following day, in the unconditional surrender of the Petrograd Bolsheviks,



who, however, refused to sign a treaty and were compelled by a sharp three weeks' campaign to accept aggravated terms. By the Brest and Berlin treaties Russia lost in the aggregate about one-fifth of her territory in Europe, including Finland, Estland, Livland, Courland, Poland, Lithuania and the Ukraine, as well as her gains under the Berlin Treaty of 1878 in the Caucasus; about one-third of her European population; one-third of her railways; about one-quarter of her internal revenues; and over three-quarters of her iron and coal fields. In addition, Russia, both North and South, was reduced to a condition of economic servitude which had no parallel in the world's history.

For 10 years at least the Germans had been privy to Lenin's schemes, and there can be no doubt but that they entertained well-defined expectations with regard to his activity when, shortly after the Revolution in Petrograd, they authorized his return to Russia from exile in Switzerland through German territory. That money played its part goes without saying. The rank and file of Lenin's supporters, and even his immediate lieutenants, were notoriously open to every financial inducement. This fact renders superfluous any consideration of the suggestion that "if"

Lenin himself accepted German money it was not for German ends; such a theory in any case raises a question in pathology, rather than a point of history. Lenin, *alias* Vladimir Ilyitch Ulianoff, reputed to be of noble birth, was a sinister fanatic who for a quarter of a century, both at home and in exile, had meditated revenge for the execution of his brother, a would-be assassin, and for his own persecution by the Russian authorities. The atrophy of the Russian Intelligence under the old *régime* evolved among the thinkers and so-called reformers a commonplace type of mind; those who emerged above the herd became in the very nature of things prominent by virtue of some mental or moral abnormality, of which hysteria and its concomitant reactions were the unmistakable expression. Lenin at an early period exhibited the symptoms which, in the judgment of his kind and in his own, qualified him to become the Saviour of Society as the leader of the Maximalists. To the memory of his own wrongs was added the bitter consciousness of the revolutionary failure in 1905. As the case of Azeff had demonstrated, who was constitutionally incapable of distinguishing where the part of revolutionary ended and that of the *agent provocateur* began, maximalism of ends comports maximalism of



PETROGRAD IN THE HANDS OF THE BOLSHEVISTS: HOLDING A STREET CORNER WITH AN ARMOURD CAR.





BRITISH REFUGEES FROM PETROGRAD  
ENTRAINING FOR MURMANSK.

means. The Germans knew their man, and took Lenin as they found him, a dogmatic fanatic, blind to everything except his own visions. In order to make assurance doubly sure and to allay by anticipation any qualms of the Bolshevik conscience, the German Reichstag on July 19, 1917, had adopted a resolution declaring that Germany stood for peace among all nations, and that "with such a peace forced acquisitions of territory and political, economic, or financial oppressions are incompatible."\* This resolution was timed so as to coincide with the Bolshevik betrayal on the Galician front, and with the simultaneous, but less immediately successful, Bolshevik rising in Petrograd.

The Reichstag resolution enshrined in a bowdlerized form the shibboleth of "no annexations or indemnities, and self-determination for all" that Lenin had brought back from Switzerland and had administered in April to M. Miliukoff, the Cadet Minister for Foreign Affairs in the First Provisional Government. The Bolshevik intellectuals, accus-



SNOWED-UP ON THE WAY.

tomed for years to take refuge from material disappointment on the unassailable heights of abstraction, adopted the formula as the chief plank in their "defeatist" platform. Lenin had not invented it; he had borrowed it bodily from the notorious manifesto signed at Zimmerwald in September, 1915, by himself and a number of fellow-internationalists, including the Swiss Socialist, Robert Grimm, who afterwards became one of his principal coadjutors in Petrograd.

The Zimmerwald Manifesto declared that :

The ruling forces of capitalist society, must carry the full weight of responsibility for this war, which has been produced by the social order nourishing them and protecting them, and which is being carried on for the sake of their interests. . . . In this intolerable situation

\* For the text of the Reichstag Resolution see Vol.XV., p. 299.

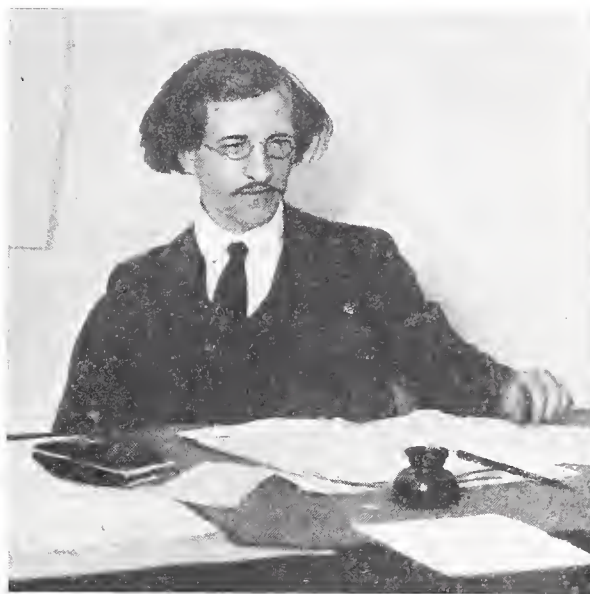




long brooded over all discussions of the future peace. This formula, which is equally hostile to all national and so-called "capitalist" Governments, the German Reichstag nevertheless made great show of adopting. During the autumn the German Government sought still further to prepare the ground and to predispose Bolshevist Russia for peace by promoting a series of more or less transparent schemes for securing the "independence" of Courland and Lithuania. In Finland and in the Ukraine, on the other hand, were laid the counter-mines which were destined to shake Russia to her foundations and to paralyze Bolshevism by restricting its subversive experiments to Old Muscovite territory.

The break-up of the All-Russian Empire, which synchronized with the advent of Bolshevism in November, 1917, and was consecrated by the treaty of Brest-Litovsk three months later, was the inevitable consequence of the Revolution and of the collapse of Peter the Great's artificial rule in Church and State. With the policies enjoined under Peter's so-called Testament went the ideals for which Petersburg had stood for two centuries. But, unhappily for Russian Liberalism and for the cause of freedom throughout the world, there survived for a season the influence of the perverted and unimaginative nationalism that from the earliest ages had made the name of Muscovy a byword. Under this influence the first Provisional Government, headed by Prince Lvoff and MM. Miliukoff and Gutchkoff, already, in March, 1917, proclaimed its inability even to adumbrate the modification of Russian territory indispensable for the establishment of a free Poland. Just as the Autocracy had obstinately declared its intention of postponing all reform until after the war, so Russian Liberals, caught in the vortex of the sinking ship of State, referred the grievances of the subject races to the nebulous tribunal of a Constituent Assembly which they made no timely effort to convene. Neither Prince Lvoff nor M. Kerensky, during their tenure of the Premiership, discerned the trend of events in the Ukraine, where recognition of the Petrograd Provisional Government in April had been followed during the summer by the establishment of a practical autonomy under the Rada at Kieff. While Prince Lvoff and his fellow-Liberals sought to veto a federal resolution as premature, M. Kerensky imagined that Ukrainian aspirations went no farther.

Both Liberals and Radicals made the fatal mistake of attempting to impose the war-aims of the old *régime* upon disenchanted peoples, more highly civilized than their Great Russian masters, that had lost in the Emperor their only link of Empire. Especially the non-Orthodox among these races had no fancy for breathing their air through Russian nostrils. The proclamation by M. Kerensky of a Re-



ANTONOFF,

Bolshevist Commander of the Petrograd Garrison.

public in "Russia" on September 16, after the failure of the Korniloff movement, gave a definite impulse to the separatist agitation in Finland, and for the following six weeks there was a succession of manifestations by Letts, Lithuanians, Cossacks, Tartars, Georgians, Armenians, and Jews, in favour of aspirations ranging from every shade of "home rule" in a federated commonwealth to complete separation.

On November 15, within 10 days after their *coup d'état*, the Bolsheviks, by the mouth of the Special Commissioner appointed by MM. Lenin and Trotsky to deal with national affairs, proclaimed the emancipation of the peoples of Russia, in conformity with the resolutions of the First and Second Soviet Congresses in the preceding June and October. The following governing principles were laid down for the realization of this policy:

- (1) The right of the peoples of Russia to free self determination, even to the point of separation and the foundation of an independent State.
- (2) The repeal of all and every kind of national or national-religious privileges and restrictions.
- (3) The unrestricted development of national minori-



[From a German photograph.]

#### GERMAN AND RUSSIAN TROOPS FRATERNIZING ON THE VILNA FRONT.

ties and ethnographic groups inhabiting the territories of Russia.

Together with this declaration Lenin issued a proclamation to the Musulman world in which he announced the approaching end of "the bloody war begun for the partition of foreign countries." The Musulman world was further notified that the Russian treaties regarding Constantinople had been torn up and that this city was to remain in Turkish hands. As an earnest of these assurances came the publication of a series of official memoranda and other documents abstracted from the archives of the Russian Foreign Office, which merely in so far as they were diplomatic deserved the appellation of "secret" applied to them by the sensation-mongering Bolsheviks.

But it was clear that behind all this smoke there must be a considerable fire, and soon it became manifest that the Bolsheviks were burning their boats. Their accession-manifesto of November 8 had pledged them to secure a general armistice; failing this, they were prepared to seek a separate armistice and to make their own terms with the enemy. On November 21 an intimation to this effect was addressed to all the representatives of the Allied Powers in Petrograd. But already the previous day General Dukhonin, the Acting Commander-in-Chief in the Field, had been instructed by wire-

less to propose an immediate armistice to the enemy commanders. This order was ignored by General Dukhonin, and on being asked over the telephone by Ensign Krilenko, *alias* Comrade Abraham, the juvenile terrorist who had assumed the functions of War Minister in Petrograd, the reasons for this insubordination, the Commander-in-Chief attempted to argue the point. General Dukhonin was promptly dispossessed, and 10 days later Krilenko, who had been appointed to the chief command, arrived at Mohileff, where after a seuffle the General was murdered by Krilenko's naval guard, who inflicted every indignity on the dead officer's body. Meanwhile Lenin and Trotsky had issued to the rank and file at the front a wireless order to take the cause of peace into their own hands and to send deputations across the lines to institute negotiations for a truce. The demoralized soldiery were not slow to avail themselves of this authority, and the Germans, who since the dawn of the Bolshevik era had been careful to insist at any rate in their reports that they returned only shot for shot on the Eastern front, gave them an effusive welcome.

Notwithstanding immediate and urgent representations on the part of the Allied Military Missions, who drew the attention of Russian Headquarters to the grave consequences of any breach of the Pact of London of September



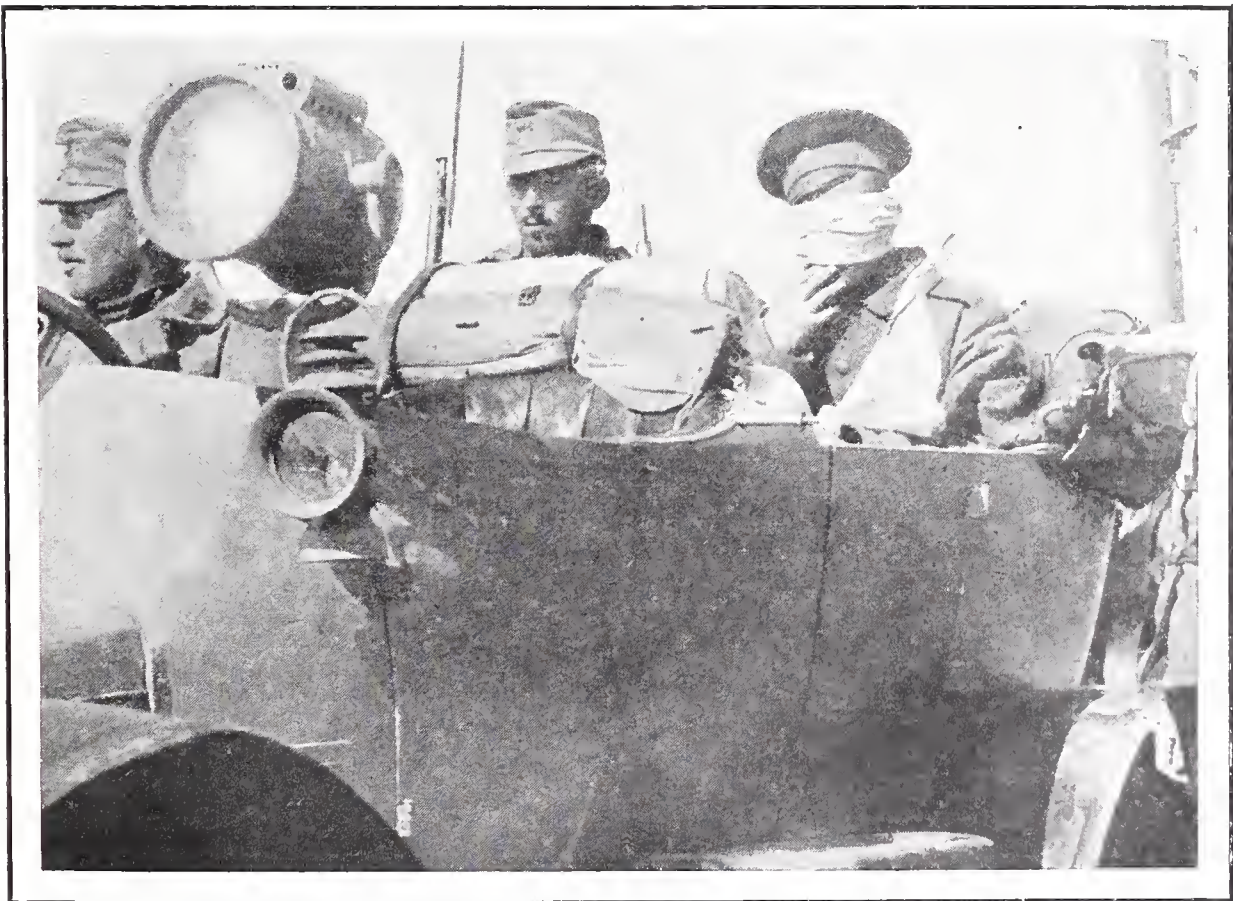
5, 1914, whereby the Entente Powers undertook not to enter into any separate negotiations with the enemy, the Bolsheviks proceeded to take more formal steps to secure an armistice. On November 28 a wireless circular had been addressed by the Bolshevik Soviet Government in Petrograd to the German, Austro-Hungarian and allied enemy Governments, declaring its readiness to enter into immediate negotiations for an armistice with a view to a general peace. On the following day the enemy Commands intimated their willingness to receive Russian parlementaires at German Eastern Headquarters at Brest-Litovsk.

Thither there proceeded from Dvinsk on December 2 three more or less shady representatives of Bolshevism, two of whom boasted German antecedents; and on December 5 they signed an agreement suspending military operations for 10 days from the Baltic to the Black Sea and on the Russo-Turkish front. By this provisional arrangement it was stipulated that troops numbering a division or more might only be moved if orders for such movements had been given before the day on which the agreement to suspend military operations was signed.

With this preliminary agreement with the enemy the plan of the Bolshevik peace campaign became apparent. Proceeding by stages, Lenin and Trotsky designed to advance from a suspension of hostilities to a regular armistice, and from this to peace negotiations. The Allies of Russia were given to understand that they would be at liberty to join in at any of



ENSIGN KRILENKO,  
Bolshevist Commander-in-Chief.



RUSSIAN PARLEMENTAIRE BEING TAKEN BLINDFOLDED TO GERMAN HEAD-QUARTERS.





THE RUSSIAN PARLEMENTAIRES (in centre) AT GERMAN HEADQUARTERS, BREST-LITOVSK.

these stages, and these hints to the Allied Governments were reinforced by frantic wireless appeals over their heads to the toiling masses in all Allied and neutral lands. As an additional incentive Trotsky pledged himself to publish the whole of the proceedings at the conferences between the Bolsheviks and the enemy. Further, on December 6, Trotsky officially informed the Allied representatives in Petrograd that hostilities had that day been suspended on the Russian front, and that if their Governments did not avail themselves of the opportunity thus presented in order to join Russia on the expiry of this truce in concluding with the enemy a general armistice, it would devolve upon them definitely to declare the aims for which the nations might have to shed their blood during yet a fourth year of war.

To all these invitations and intimations the Allies, who still reserved recognition of the Soviet Government, returned no official response beyond making from the outset their standpoint clear to the Russian High Command through their accredited Military Missions. Nevertheless, not only the Bolsheviks, but also, by one of the many curious coincidences that marked their accession, the Germans themselves



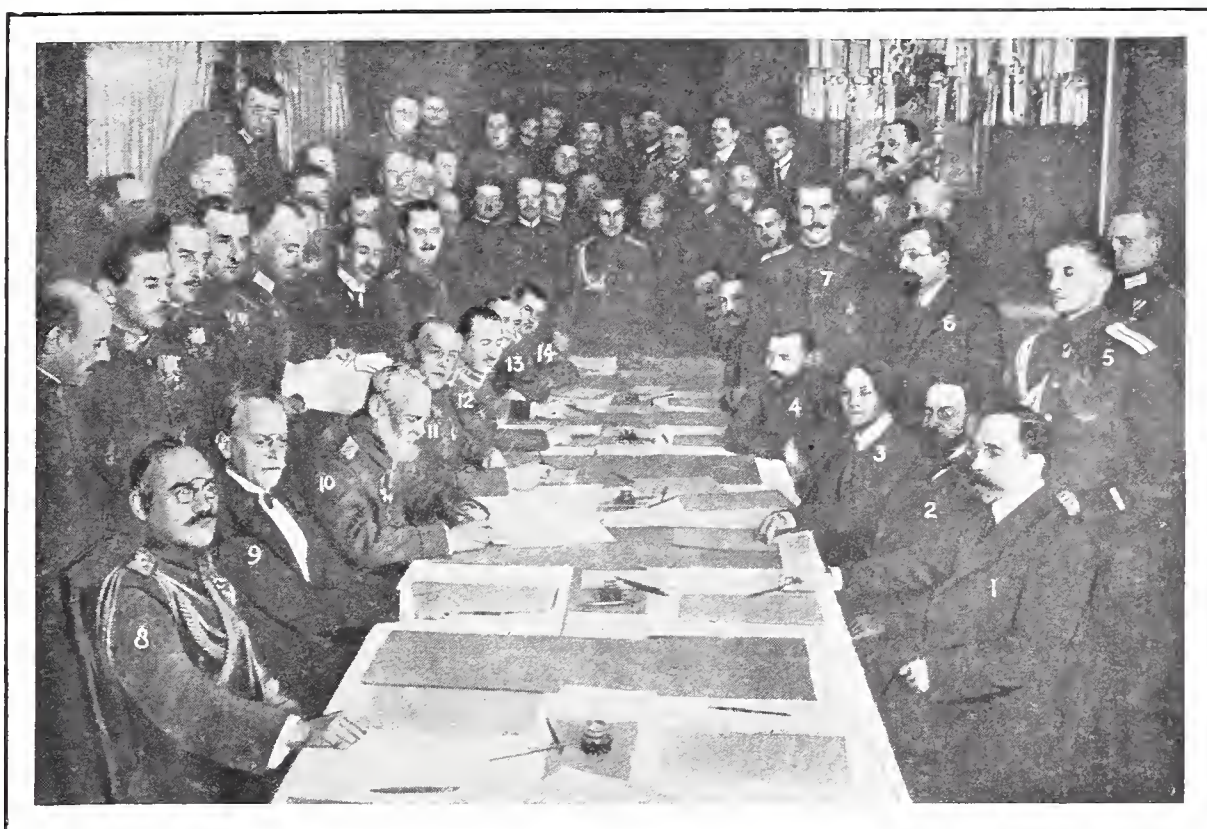
HOW THE DELEGATES ARRIVED.

seem to the very last to have cherished the belief that the mere prospect of negotiations involving a discussion of questions that ranged in extent from Warsaw to Vladivostok and from the Arctic to Afghanistan could not fail to exert an almost irresistible influence upon Great Britain and France, and would inevitably compel them to participate. Both the Germans and their satellites in Petrograd seem to have considered that the Western Powers would think twice before facing without Russian aid the undivided forces of the Central Empires. Extraordinary play was made with this argument in Soviet circles in Petrograd in order to overcome the last scruples of the rank and file.



On December 12, 1917, the Bolsheviks, whether as the conscious agents or the unconscious dupes of their Berlin paymasters is immaterial, found themselves engaged in the conclusion of a regular armistice agreement which was duly signed at Brest-Litovsk on December 15 by Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria, on behalf of the German High Command, and various other enemy and Russian representatives. The armistice which was to endure for the space of 28 days, became effective at noon on December 17. In

front between the Black Sea and the Baltic, that is to say, such transfers as had not been begun before the time when the Armistice Agreement was signed." The Bolsheviks took credit to themselves for what they deemed to be a particularly mansuetudinous provision for the Allies, but as a matter of fact they were perfectly well aware that this undertaking could not be made binding on the enemy. In further pursuance of the armistice agreement there arrived in Petrograd a number of German so-called missions, under the general direction



PRINCE LEOPOLD OF BAVARIA SIGNING THE ARMISTICE AT BREST-LITOVSK, DECEMBER 15, 1917.

1, Kameneff ; 2, Joffe ; 3, Mdme. Bizenko ; 4, Rear-Admiral Altvater ; 5, Captain Lipsky ; 6, Karakhan ; 7, Lieut.-Colonel Fokke ; 8, Zekki Pasha ; 9, M. de Meray ; 10, Prince Leopold ; 11, General Hoffmann ; 12, Colonel Gantcheff (Bulgaria) ; 13, Captain Horn ; 14, Captain Rey.

the preamble to this agreement it was set forth that the armistice had been concluded for the purpose of "bringing about a lasting and honourable peace for all the parties," and by Article 9 it was expressly provided that: "The contracting parties immediately after the signature of the present armistice Agreement shall begin peace negotiations." The stipulation against any considerable movement of troops by either side was embodied in Article 2, which laid it down that: "The contracting parties undertake that, until January 14, 1918, they will not put into operation any transfer of troops from the

of Count Mirbaeh, who subsequently became the first German Ambassador to Soviet Russia. The function of these various missions was to prepare the ground for the restoration of economic and other treaty relations and to furnish the Berlin Government with first-hand information regarding local conditions. What these emissaries could see for themselves at a glance was that, as Krilenko, the subaltern War Minister, himself had confessed, the Army was without clothes and boots, without horses or transport, and in a state of starvation. They learned and duly reported that in the Second, Fifth, Seventh, Tenth, Eleventh and

Twelfth Russian Armies about 75 per cent. of the horses, guns and *matériel* had disappeared, that every form of discipline had long since been destroyed, and that deserters, in bands both large and small, were terrorizing the whole countryside adjoining the front, and that an equally large proportion had made their way



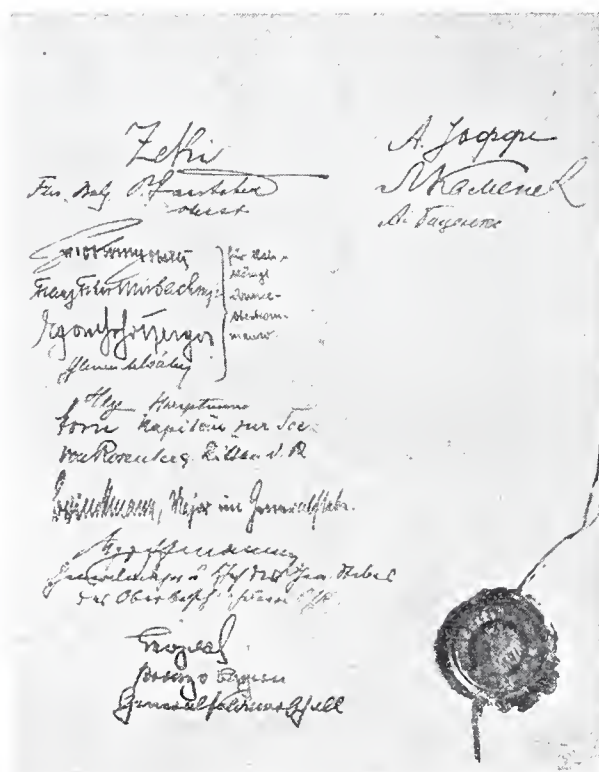
COUNT MIRBACH,

First German Ambassador to Soviet Russia.

home. The train service, both in the field and in the interior, was almost completely at a standstill, owing to the insurmountable arrears in the repair-shops, while the production of Russian industries had sunk to 5 per cent. of their peace-time output. In every aspect and direction of national life there was ample evidence that the moral and material ruin of Russia was complete. In the presence of this immeasurable disaster the Bolshevik armistice delegates found heart and front enough to include among their demands "freedom for literary agitation" in Germany. The German representatives replied that they imagined that their Government would raise no objection to the dispatch of propaganda literature to England, France and Italy.

During the course of the third week in December the Emperor William authorized the Imperial Chancellor to conclude peace with Russia, and at a subsequent meeting of Reichstag party representatives, including for the first time the leader of the Independent Socialists, Herr Haase, this decision was communicated by Count Hertling, who further intimated that he had charged the German

Foreign Secretary, Herr von Kühlmann, with the conduct of the negotiations. Fortified by the approval of this highly democratic conclave, Herr von Kühlmann proceeded to Brest-Litovsk, where, conjointly with Count Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and other enemy envoys, he was to meet the Soviet peace delegates. Herr von Kühlmann arrived at Brest on December 21. Among the German officials attached to him were Herr von Rosenberg, Baron von Hoesch, General Hoffmann, Chief of Staff to Prince Leopold of Bavaria, and Major Brinckmann. Count Czernin, who arrived the day before and had made the acquaintance of the Russians at an informal dinner party, was accompanied by M. de Meré, Baron von Wieser, Minister of Commerce, Count Colloredo, Count Csaky, Lieut. Field-Marshal von Csicseries, Lieut. Pokorny and Major von Glaise. The Bulgarian principal delegate, M. Popoff, Minister of



SIGNATURES TO THE ARMISTICE.

Justice, was supported by M. Kosseff, Secretary to the Bulgarian Foreign Office, M. Stoyanovitch, Director of Posts and Telegraphs, Colonel Ganteheff, and Dr. Anastasoff. The Turkish representatives were Ibrahim Hakki Pasha, Rechad Hikmet Bey, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and General Zekki Pasha.

The Petrograd Soviet was represented by MM. Joffe, Kameneff, Pokrovsky, Karakhan, Lubinski, Weltman and Pavlovitch, and Mme. Bizenko,





THE HOUSE AT BREST-LITOVSK IN WHICH THE ARMISTICE CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE.

with Admiral W. M. Altvater, General Samoyilo, Colonel Fokke, Colonel Zeplit and Captain Lipsky. General Skalon, who had accompanied the first armistice delegation as military expert, had committed suicide at Brest as a protest against the signature of the armistice agreement. The composition of the Russian delegation was considerably varied as the negotiations advanced, notably after the arrival of M. Trotsky in January. Originally the deputation consisted of a workman, a peasant, a soldier and a sailor, attended by political and military bear-leaders as experts, and the Bolsheviks invited the "toiling masses" of the world to contemplate these symbolic fruits of the Soviet dispensation. The political experts in particular, however, seem to have found their task rather trying, since some of them appear to have paid a visit to Warsaw where they made merry in a well-known restaurant to the tune of £200 for broken glass alone. The departure of the special train which had been placed at their disposal was delayed for six hours in order to enable them to sleep off the effects of their carouse. When M. Trotsky arrived his volubility put all the others very much in the shade, and most of

the experts left Brest, including M. Kameneff, who was later sent on an abortive mission to London. M. Trotsky also left Brest in a huff on February 10, and the four Sovietists who signed the final treaty with Germany under duress on March 3 were all of them reputed jailbirds; two of them were said to have been imprisoned for embezzlement, one for burglary, and one for trafficking in women.

The first sitting of the Brest Conference was held on December 22, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The proceedings were opened by Prince Leopold of Bavaria in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief on the Eastern Front. He welcomed the delegates and expressed the hope that the negotiations would speedily lead to a peace which would be a blessing to all nations. Hakki Pasha, as senior delegate, thereupon invited Herr von Kühlmann to take the chair, and the German Foreign Secretary, after making reference to the approach of Christmas (a matter of little moment to Jewish and Russian atheists), testified to the spirit of "placable humanity" in which they had met. The negotiations, he said, "must take into account what has become historical, in order that we may not lose our footing on

the firm ground of facts: but, on the other hand, they must also be inspired by that new great impulse which has brought us here together."

The Russian delegates from the outset made it clear that their instructions were to discuss the possibility of concluding peace on the basis of "no annexations or indemnities, and self-determination for all." The



M. JOFFE.

Soviet spokesman who followed Herr von Kühlmann declared that, starting from the standpoint of the clearly expressed will of the peoples of Russia to attain as soon as possible a general and just peace, and appealing to the resolutions in this sense by the All-Russian Soviet Congress, it considered the continuation of the war merely with the object of annexations a crime. The Russian representatives accordingly proposed that the six following points should serve as guiding principles for the negotiations:

(1) No forcible union of territories conquered during the war shall be permitted. The troops occupying such territories shall be withdrawn within the shortest period.

(2) The political independence of peoples that have lost their independence during the war shall be restored to its fullest extent.

(3) National groups which before the war were not politically independent shall be guaranteed the possibility of deciding by referendum the question of belonging to one State or another; or, enjoying their political independence, this referendum must be arranged in such a manner that complete independence in voting is guaranteed for the entire population of the region in question, including emigrants and refugees.

(4) In regard to territory of mixed nationality the right of the minority shall be protected by a special law giving it independence of national culture, and, if practicable, autonomous administration.

(5) None of the belligerent countries shall be obliged to pay another country any so-called war costs. Contributions already levied are to be paid back. Regarding

compensation for losses suffered by private persons in consequence of the war, these shall be met out of a special fund, to which the belligerents shall proportionately contribute.

(6) Colonial questions shall be decided in conformity with the principles laid down in Points 1 to 4.

The Russian delegation further deprecated any exceptional measures in the nature of economic boycotts, forced commercial treaties, or sea blockades.

On Christmas Day Count Czernin returned the following reply in the name of the Central Powers:

The delegations of the Quadruple Alliance are in accord with an immediate general peace without forcible acquisitions of territory and without war indemnities. When the Russian Delegation condemns a war prosecuted only for purposes of conquest, the delegations of the Allies are in accord with its view. The Governments of the Allies have without deviation adhered to this standpoint. They solemnly declare their determination



JOFFE AND KAMENEFF AT BREST-LITOVSK.

to sign without delay a peace that will end this war on the foregoing basis without exception and with the same just conditions for all the belligerent Powers.

It must, however, be expressly pointed out that all the Powers now participating in the war must within a suitable period, without exception and without any reserve, bind themselves to the most precise adherence to conditions binding all nations in the same manner, if the suppositions of the Russian *exposé* are to be fulfilled; for it would not do for the Powers of the Quadruple



Alliance negotiating with Russia one-sidedly to bind themselves to these conditions without a guarantee that Russia's Allies will recognize and will carry out these conditions honestly and without reserve also as regards the Quadruple Alliance.

Count Czernin then proceeded to deal severally with the six points submitted by the Russian Delegation, with regard to which he observed :

(1) It is not the intention of the Allied Governments to appropriate forcibly territories which are at present occupied. The question of the troops in occupied territories must be settled in the sense of the withdrawal of troops from such and such places.

(2) It is not the intention of the Allies to rob of its independence any of the nations which in the course of this war have lost their political independence.

(3) The question of the State allegiance of national groups which possess no State independence cannot, in the opinion of the Quadruple Alliance, be regulated as between States, but is, if required, to be solved by every State with its peoples independently in a constitutional manner.

(4) Likewise, in accordance with the declarations of the statesmen of the Quadruple Alliance, protection of the right of minorities forms an essential component part of the constitutional right of peoples to self-determination. The Allied Governments also grant validity to this principle everywhere in so far as it is practically realizable.

(5) The Allied Powers have frequently emphasised the possibility that not only could both sides renounce indemnification for war costs, but also indemnification for war damage. Accordingly, every belligerent Power would only have to indemnify for the expenditure for its nationals who have become prisoners of war, as well as for damage done in their own territory by illegal acts of force committed against civilian nationals belonging to the enemy. The Russian Government's proposal for the creation of a special fund for this purpose could only be taken into consideration if other belligerent Powers were within a suitable period to join in the peace negotiations.

(6) Regarding this point, Germany is the only one of the four Allied Powers that disposes of overseas colonies. On this subject the German delegation, in full accord with the Russian proposals, makes the following declaration :—

"The return of colonial territory, forcibly occupied and captured during the war, is an essential component part of the German demands which under no circumstances can be departed from. The Russian demand for the speedy evacuation of such regions as are occupied by the enemy likewise corresponds with German views. In view of the nature of the German colonial territory, the form proposed by the delegation on the basis of the principle previously discussed seems at present impracticable. The fact that the natives of the German colonies, despite the greatest difficulties and the slight prospects of success in the struggle against an enemy many times superior, and disposing of unlimited overseas reinforcements, have through thick and thin loyally adhered to their German friends, is proof of their attachment and their resolve in all circumstances to remain with Germany, a proof which in seriousness and in weight far exceeds every possible demonstration of wishes by voting."

The principles for economic intercourse propounded by the Russian delegation in association with the six points just discussed meet with the unconditional agreement of the delegations of the Allied Powers.

The spokesman of the Russian delegation thereupon welcomed what he described as the frank statement on behalf of the Quadruple

Alliance; while noting the reservations on Points 3 and 5, he expressed the opinion that an enormous step forward had been made on the road towards a general peace. The Russian delegation accordingly proposed that the public negotiations be suspended for 10 days from December 25 until January 4, in order that the other belligerents might have yet another



GENERAL HOFFMANN,  
Chief of Staff to Prince Leopold of Bavaria.

opportunity of signifying their attitude towards the Brest negotiations. On the expiry of this period the negotiations were in all circumstances to be continued.

In the meantime, at Count Czernin's suggestion, the Soviet delegates agreed to embark on the following day, December 26, upon a discussion of the special points which would in any case have to be settled between Russia and the Central Powers. With characteristic promptitude the latter on the morrow immediately broached the question of a resumption of traffic and other communications.

On December 28 (after an aside on the 27th, as a result of which the Russians agreed to the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum* with Bulgaria and conceded to her a seat on the Danube Commission) the Soviet delegates arrived at a formal understanding with the Central Empires on all technical questions appertaining to an eventual treaty of peace.

Reverting to their six points, the Russian representatives in conformity with the first of these principles, dealing with occupied territories, proposed that Russian troops should be withdrawn from all Austro-Hungarian, Turkish and Persian territory occupied by them, and that the Central Powers should similarly withdraw their forces from Poland, Lithuania and Courland, on a date to be fixed by a military commission.

The German delegation countered with the following full-fledged draft for Articles I and II of the eventual treaty :

I.—Russia and Germany are to declare the state of war at an end.

Both nations are resolved to live together in future in peace and friendship.

On condition of complete reciprocity towards her allies, Germany would be ready, as soon as peace is concluded with Russia and the demobilization of the Russian Armies has been accomplished, to evacuate her present positions and occupied Russian territory, in so far as no different inferences result from Article II.

II.—The Russian Government, having in accordance with its principles proclaimed for all people without exception living within the Russian Empire the right of self-determination, including complete separation, takes cognizance of the decisions expressing the will of the people demanding full State independence and separation from the Russian Empire for Poland, Lithuania, Courland, and portions of Estland and Livland. The Russian Government recognizes that in present circumstances these manifestations must be regarded as the expression of the will of the people and is ready to draw conclusions therefrom.

As in those districts to which the foregoing stipulations apply the question of evacuation is not such as is provided for in Article I., a special commission shall discuss and fix the time and other details in conformity and accordance with the Russian idea of the necessary ratification by plebiscite, on broad lines, and without any military pressure whatever, of the already existing proclamations of separation.

The Russian delegates, while indeed repeating their view that only a free vote in the complete absence of foreign troops could be regarded as a *de facto* expression of the people's will, do not seem immediately to have comprehended the full bearing of the German proposal, and assented to the appointment of the stipulated commission. On the following day, moreover, December 29, when the Brest Conference adjourned amid the felicitations of the enemy delegates upon the statesmanlike qualities of the "Russian gentlemen," M. Trotsky issued from Petrograd a remarkable appeal to the Allies to join in the negotiations, on the ground that the Central Powers had agreed to the evacuation of occupied territories. He asked the Allies whether, if self-determination could be achieved for Alsace-Lorraine, Galicia, Posen, Bohemia and Yugo-Slavia, they would grant it to Ireland, Egypt, India, Mesopotamia,

Madagascar and Indo-China. Unless they accepted this programme, Russia would continue the negotiations. It was not until the return of the Russian delegates to Petrograd that the flagrant contradiction between the principles professed by the enemy negotiators on December 25 and December 28 was brought home to M. Trotsky. The turn of the year witnessed an extraordinary outburst of denunciation of German "hypocrisy" in the Soviet Press; this campaign found an echo in German Socialist organs, some of which did not hesitate even at that date to declare that the decision to maintain the occupation of Poland and of the Baltic Provinces, and under this occupation to compel these territories to determine their future relations with the Central Empires, constituted a clear case of annexation. M. Trotsky, for his part, continued to indulge in all manner of ingenious theories designed to explain the contradiction in the German attitude. Thus, long after the event, he sought to contend that it was "under pressure from the German popular masses, who desire peace," that a Reichstag majority, in July 1917, had pronounced in favour of peace without annexations. The Government, he continued, had to acquiesce in this demand and to identify itself with it to the extent of doing lip-service to its principle at the opening of the Brest Conference; when three days later the Central Empires proclaimed in the proposed draft for Articles I and II of the eventual treaty their real aims, they trusted that the Russian delegates, in the interests of their own democratic dignity, would clothe these demands in an appropriate form. But, as M. Trotsky boasted, the Russians refused to "cover up brutal annexationist pretensions with the fig-leaf of democracy."

On the surface the German explanation of the contradiction was simplicity itself. The principles to which the Central Powers professed to subscribe on December 25 represented an "offer" to all the belligerents; this "offer" remained open for 10 days; failing acceptance by the Allies of Russia, the Central Powers were left free to treat on their own terms with Russia alone. This, at any rate, was the situation with which M. Trotsky found himself confronted when he decided to take matters in hand himself and to proceed to Brest, where he arrived on January 7. While the question as to how far he was a conscious tool of the Germans may



remain unanswered, there could be no doubt whatever that from the moment of his arrival at Brest he was completely their dupe. Herr von Kühlmann and Count Czernin allowed him to exhaust the whole gamut of Bolshevist emotions, from his first pompous announcement that he had not come as the representative of a defeated nation, to his final defiant capitulation a few weeks later; when they curtly refused to transfer the negotiations

from Brest to Stockholm, his meek submission showed of what stuff his defiance was made; and when they pointed out that he was erecting his future State upon a void, he sulkily broke off the discussion.

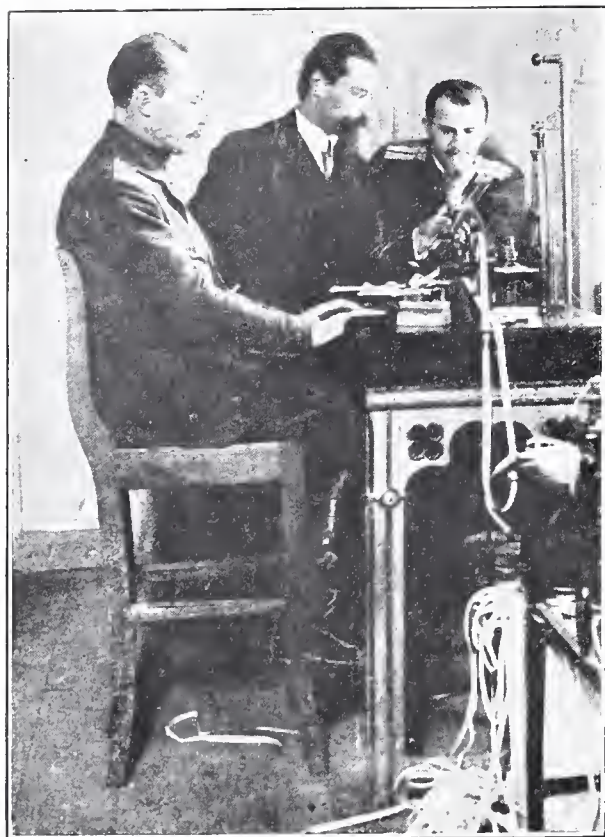
While Herr von Kühlmann was basking in the sunshine of publicity and giving his adversary rope enough by which to hang himself, Berlin and the German High Command exhorted him to keep the discussion within



TROTSKY ARRIVES AT BREST-LITOVSK AND IS GREETED BY GERMAN OFFICERS.



bounds. Already before the January resumption at Brest it was ostentatiously reported that General von Ludendorff, becoming anxious for his spring campaign in the West, had threatened to resign if the diplomats were to be allowed to do all the talking. In reality, the difference of opinion between the German military and political leaders did not go very deep: while the former demanded a territorial readjustment as an indispensable preliminary to peace, the politicians contended that this result could be attained by judicious manipulation of the principle of self-determination. The emergence of a new factor, the full weight of which neither side had at first been able to gauge, was destined to promote in the most opportune manner



OFFICE OF THE BREST-PETROGRAD DIRECT TELEGRAPH IN THE CONFERENCE BUILDING.

the aspirations both of the enemy soldiers and of the politicians.

On November 20, at the moment when the Petrograd Bolsheviks were initiating their armistice campaign, the greater part of Southern Russia proclaimed itself an independent State under the style of the Ukrainian People's Republic. The Ukraine, which in Russian administrative parlance comprised the Little Russian Governments of Kieff, Poltava, Teher-

nigoff and Kharkoff, originally designated the whole of the debatable marches that lay between Muscovy and Poland and Muscovy and the Turks. The revival of this regional expression, which survives also in the Brandenburg Ucker-Mark, with a wider application to



THE CONFERENCE BUILDING AT BREST-LITOVSK,  
Showing the wireless installation.

the national aspirations of the Little and Southern Russians is attributed to Professor Hrushevsky, who at one time occupied the chair of History at Lemberg University, and who published at Leipzig in 1906 a standard *Geschichte des ukrainischen (ruthenischen) Volkes*. The Germans and Austrians were perfectly familiar with these ideals, which in the very early days of the war were graphically presented on German war-maps of Russia showing a vast extent of territory as "Ukrainian" in speech and "separatist" in feeling. That these claims were not purely vicarious was shown by the Ukrainian manifesto of November 20, which definitely included in the Ukrainian sphere the Governments of Kieff, Podolia, Volhynia, Tchernigoff, Poltava, Kharkoff, Ekaterinoslav, Kherson, and Tauris (without special reference to the Crimea proper), together with specific areas in the Kholm, Kursk and Voronezh regions. To these the Germans habitually—if at

first only mentally—added part of the Don Cossack Territory. Early in the war there was founded, under Austro-German auspices, a so-called League for the Emancipation of the Ukraine, with the professed object of liberating the land from “Pan-Slavism” and other manifestations of the Muscovite spirit. In the interests of civilisation Europe was entreated to aid the promoters of these aspirations in establishing in the boundless Steppes a bulwark against Great Russian domination. On the Russian side of the border the Ukrainians had to bide their time and keep within purely literary bounds. Not until the Petrograd Revolution were the Ukrainians able to declare themselves. But after March, 1917, affairs moved quickly. By the spring the Rada Government had constituted itself at Kieff, the heart of the Ukraine, and by the end of June all the public services had been taken over and relations with Petrograd had been established on a “diplomatic” footing. Everywhere the Ukrainian language was revived, and the blue and yellow flag of the Ukraine supplanted the red emblem of the Revolution

under which the July offensive on the Galician front so signally failed. But notwithstanding this assertion of individuality, particularism had not yet matured into separatism. Indeed, the advent of the Bolsheviks seemed to confirm the prospect of a federal union within the Russian State, since the Ukrainians had all along exhibited marked predilections for a communistic *régime*. But the Bolsheviks, while not disputing the Ukrainian right of self-definition, demanded the abdication of the Kieff Rada as a self-appointed body, and the establishment there of the Soviet authority as in Petrograd. The Rada, for its part, “in view of the special importance which the Ukrainian Republic has attained,” felt itself strong enough not only to resist Bolshevik pretensions, but also to claim for the Ukraine not less than one-third of the representation in the future Federal Government. The Ukrainian authorities further threatened to cut off supplies to North Russia, unless the Petrograd Bolsheviks gave an assurance that they would not interfere in the affairs of the Ukraine and facilitated the return to Ukrainian territory of



AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN AND RUSSIAN TROOPS FRATERNIZING DURING THE BREST NEGOTIATIONS, DECEMBER 1917.



Ukrainian military units serving on other parts of the Russian front. They further demanded complete freedom of action not only on the Ukrainian but also on the Rumanian and South-Western Fronts. The Bolsheviks, who during November and December were kept in a state of considerable agitation by the movements of General Kaledin and General Korniloff, accused the Kieff Rada of being in league with the counter-revolutionary *bourgeois*

period contemplated taking part in any eventual negotiations. There may have been moments when external influences made the Rada waver in its determination; but with the Bolsheviks, upon whom there was no check from outside, harrying and burning in Ukrainian territory, the Rada ultimately had no choice but to make peace with the Central Empires at almost any cost. At the same time the Ukrainian politicians were perfectly aware of



UKRAINIANS LEAVE KIEFF TO FIGHT THE BOLSHEVISTS.

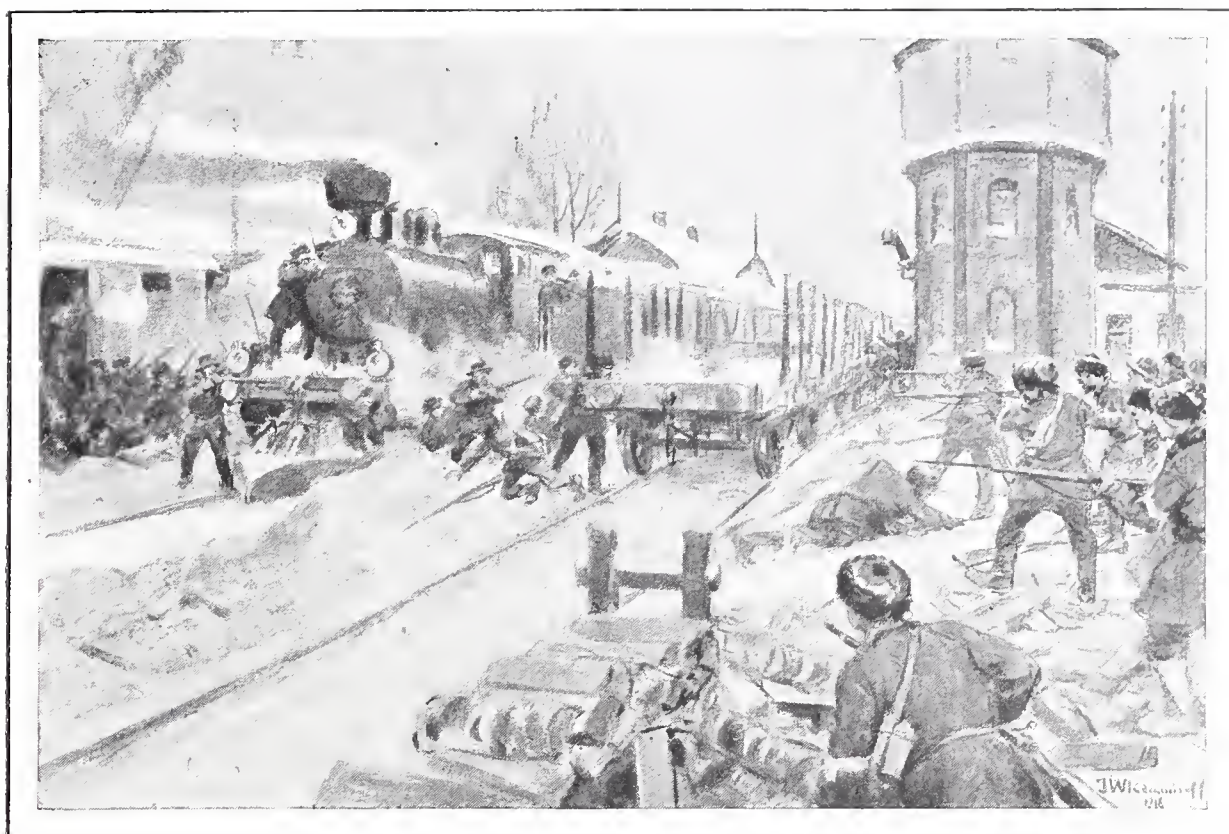
and reiterated their demand that Soviet forces should be allowed to march through Ukrainian territory. Failing to extract the necessary satisfaction, the Bolsheviks thereupon made war, in due guerilla form, on the Ukrainians.

The conflict thus engendered reflected the economic and social differences between North and South Russia. The Northern urban proletariat, suffering from hunger, was ready for social revolution; whereas the well-to-do peasantry and the middle-class elements in the South, although equally anxious for peace, were less affected by revolutionary ideas.

By virtue of their resumption of an international *status*, as proclaimed on November 20, the Ukrainians, who shared the universal desire in Russia for peace, at a quite early

what these Powers would stand to gain by a settlement that would not only break up the Russian military and diplomatic front, but would divert to the West all the resources of Southern Russia. As, in 1915, the Ukrainian League had sent a message of congratulation to the Emperor William upon the occupation of the Government of Kholm by German forces, it was not surprising to find this region included in the price of peace. But more important, although equally natural, was the Ukrainian demand for Eastern Galicia, which the Rada strove by every means to secure, but without avail. The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count Czernin, who at this time was passing through a "no annexation" phase, resolutely refused to give way. The





FIGHT BETWEEN UKRAINIAN RADA SOLDIERS AND BOLSHEVISTS.

sole territorial easement in this direction that the Ukrainians succeeded in extracting from the Central Powers was a contingent promise that if Galicia should at any time withdraw from the Austrian State union, only the Vistula Grand Duchies of Auschwitz and Zator should fall to Poland, while the ancient kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria should be incorporated with the Ukraine. On the other hand, the Central Powers were bound to pledge themselves effectively to guarantee the independence of the Ukraine, a stipulation that was designed to meet eventualities from the direction of Poland as well as from the North.

While the completion of these preliminaries prevented Ukrainian representatives from taking part in the armistice negotiations in mid-December, the Rada by Christmas had sent a special mission to Brest-Litovsk with a mandatory declaration, dated December 24, to the effect that: "The Ukrainian People's Republic, represented by the Secretariat-General, acts independently in matters of international law, and desires, like other Powers, to participate in all the peace negotiations, conferences, and congresses." The members of the mission received every consideration at Austro-German hands, and on December 27 they were presented to Prince Leopold of Bavaria.

The arrival of the Ukrainian delegation at the critical moment when the Central Powers were about to make their bid for a separate peace with All-Russia unquestionably enabled German diplomacy as early as December 28 to repudiate the principles to which only three days earlier, when it still seemed paramount to lure M. Trotsky to Brest, Count Czernin had been instructed to pay homage. With two strings to his bow, Herr von Kühlmann contemplated with complete equanimity both the fretful fuming of Grand Headquarters and the simulated misgivings of the July Majority in the Reichstag. With the Ukraine peace in his pocket, he could afford not only to play with the "Soviet gentlemen," but also to put off the querulous demands of the Poles for representation at Brest.

On January 8, 1918, M. Vsiavolod Holubovitch, Ukrainian Secretary of State for Commerce and Industry, attended at Brest-Litovsk the first preliminary discussion after M. Trotsky's arrival between the representatives of the Quadruple Alliance and the Soviet delegates. On January 10 M. Holubovitch communicated a statement, on behalf of M. Vinnitchenko, President of the Ukrainian Secretariat, and M. Shulgin, Secretary for International Affairs, rehearsing the motives of the Ukrainian Republic in associating itself





UKRAINIAN DELEGATES ON THE WAY TO BREST-LITOVSK ACCOMPANIED BY GERMAN OFFICERS.

with the demand for peace, and setting forth the Rada's peace programme—in substance, no annexations or indemnities, self-determination for all, and compensation for small nations. Above all, the Ukrainian Rada insisted that only a peace concluded by a Federal Russian Government, or its equivalent, could be regarded as valid. On January 12 the Central Powers, while reserving for the peace treaty recognition of the Ukrainian Republic as an independent State, invited the Ukrainian delegates to take part as plenipotentiaries in the conference. M. Trotsky somewhat grudgingly concurred.

While Herr von Kühlmann and General Hoffmann publicly contended with M. Trotsky as to the degree in which the question of self-determination in the occupied territories might be described as a German domestic concern, Count Czernin turned to account a timely indisposition in order to settle matters with the Ukrainian delegates in private. Notwithstanding M. Trotsky's protest against these confabulations, by January 20 an agreement in principle had been reached. On January 26, during an adjournment of the Brest Conference, the Petrograd Soviet formally declared "war" on the Kieff Rada, and when the conference reassembled a few days later M.

Trotsky presented as his colleagues a number of authentic Ukrainian Bolsheviks. The Quadruple Alliance delegates, however, confirmed their recognition of the Kieff Rada envoys, and, despite the fall of Kieff on February 8 into Bolshevik hands, accompanied by a triumphant assertion from Petrograd that nothing remained of the Rada "but a sad memory," the Central Powers at 2 o'clock the following morning signed peace with the Ukraine. On the day after M. Trotsky intimated that Russia, while refraining from signing a formal peace treaty, declared as ended the state of war with the four enemy States, and that all the Russian forces would be demobilized.

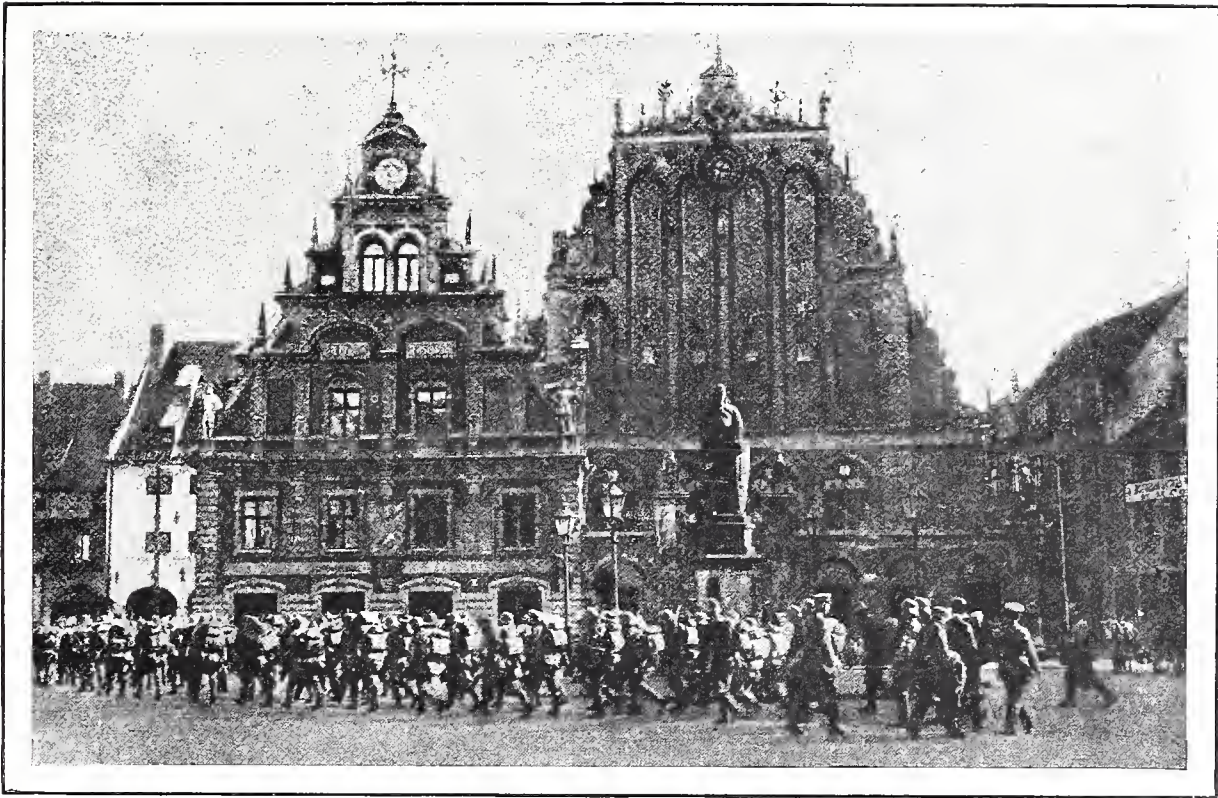
The satisfaction excited in Berlin and Vienna by the treaty with the Ukraine was seriously marred by the void that had been created in relations with Great Russia as a result of M. Trotsky's *coup de tête*, which left the Germans and their allies without a settlement of all the questions that had been raised at Brest. M. Trotsky had scorned as mere diplomatic obscurantism the time-honoured phraseology in which two reconciled adversaries recorded their determination thenceforth to live in peace and amity. A lesson in deport-



ment was indicated. Accordingly on February 18, in response to pre-arranged cries for help from Estland, Livland and the harassed Ukraine, German flying columns moved forward from the armistice front between Riga and Lutsik, and by a series of forced marches Reval, and ultimately Narva, was reached in the North, together with Pskoff, the middle line of the Dnieper, and Kieff in the South; this advance was supported in due course by Austria, in response to "cries for help" from

"Red Guards" and other horrors. The Petrograd Bolsheviks had readily concluded a treaty with their fellow-fanatics in Finland, but only repeated threats on the part of the German Government could induce them to enter into negotiations with the Kieff Rada.

The whole of this chain of treaties, with Finland, with North and South Russia, as well as with Rumania, exhibited strongly marked annexationist and Imperialist features. The only redeeming aspect of the policy that



GERMANS IN RIGA: PASSING THE "HALL OF THE BLACKHEADS" IN THE RATHHAUS PLATZ.

Podolia, and the Austrian move resulted in the capitulation of Rumania and the occupation of Odessa by the Germans. On February 21 the Germans had made known their aggravated terms; the Bolsheviks surrendered without a struggle, signed the treaty on March 3, and, in consequence of the German menace to Petrograd, they transferred the seat of the Soviet Government to Moscow, where the treaty was ratified by a congress of the proletariat. On March 5 the Germans, who already two months earlier had recognized the new Finnish Republic, signed a political and commercial arrangement with Finland, and subsequently they landed in the Åland Islands, in order thence to throw into Finland an expeditionary force to assist in setting the new Republic on its legs and rid the country of the rival Soviet administration with its

prompted them was the fact that a few weeks after their conclusion the July Majority in the Reichstag threw off the mask and repudiated the purely "tactical" resolution which had served to lure Russia to Brest-Litovsk. Politically and economically, no less than in a purely territorial sense, these treaties were in effect even more predatory in their provisions than the Treaty of Frankfurt which the Germans imposed on France in 1871. In every clause some claim or other was put forward that subverted the existing order on land and sea, or undermined it with a view to the future. In the case of Spitzbergen, where vested German interests were disclosed, the trend of international opinion was ignored in favour of a prejudicial settlement; in the Baltic, apart from the embargo laid upon the Åland Islands, the convention of April 23, 1908, concluded by



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE BREST TREATIES.

The final Brest Treaty of March 3, 1918, left the German Army holding the front indicated in the Map by the solid black line from Narva to the Ukraine border beyond Homel. The broken line in Ukrainian territory indicates the starting point of the German invasion of the Ukraine and of the Don country after the capture of Kieff and Odessa, when the Crimea also was occupied.

The "agreed" line West of which Russia renounced all territorial rights runs West of Reval, through the Gulf of Riga to a point just above that city, which it embraces; thence it follows the Dvina to the extreme eastern point of Courland above Dvinsk, whence it curves south-west to the east of Vilna, and across the Niemen down to the northern Ukraine frontier near Pruzhany.

Germany with Sweden and Denmark as well as with Russia, went by the board; the transfer of the Kholm Government to the Ukraine represented a deliberate encroachment on the Congress Poland of 1815; while the assignment to Turkey of the Caucasian territories of Batum, Kars and Ardahan overthrew the Berlin Act of 1878. Everywhere, in accordance with its immemorial usage, German diplomacy was at pains to create or to accentuate points

of friction between neighbouring States. Not only had the new constellation in the East been so arranged that, like a second Balkans, it might furnish inexhaustible occasion for intervention, but every effort was made to render it impossible from the outset for these ill-assorted and disjointed peoples to live for long in anything like decent quietude. Of all the new States that had been called into being, not one could boast an insurable chance



of surviving in its treaty form. Finland, contented enough at the outset with its independence, was started on a mad career with "Finnish" Petrograd as the ostensible goal; Estland, Livland, Courland and Lithuania, although still in the melting-pot, were destined some day as duchies, either singly or in combination, to be the prey of indigent princelings; while the Ukraine, whose boundaries were daily extending beyond even the wildest of nationalist dreams, in accordance with German military exigencies, could not fail ere long to find itself confronted with the alternative of fighting for these conquests by proxy, or of abandoning them without further argument. Poland (*i.e.*, "Warsaw" and "Lublin") enjoyed the dubious distinction of figuring in the *Almanach de Gotha* for 1918 under the style of a "Kingdom independent [of Russia]" (*sic*), "by virtue of the manifestoes of the German Emperor and of the Emperor of Austria on November 5, 1916." It was further set out that, "by virtue of the patent of September 12, 1917, the supreme power in the State is exercised until its transfer to a King or Regent, by a Council of Regency, composed of three members, whose acts of government must be counter-signed by the responsible Minister-President. The legislative power is exercised by the Council of Regency in conjunction with the Council of State which is to be reconstituted."

The Treaty with the Ukraine was interesting not only in itself as the first international act of a newly-created State which owed its existence to the fortunes of the war, but also for the fact that in essentials it served as a model for all the Brest-Berlin-Bukarest conventions, and thus afforded a clear conception of the typical *Pax Germanica*. Apart from this, moreover, it possessed a special character as a "Bread-Peace," and this characteristic was reflected in provisions that are unique in modern international treaty-law.

The Main Treaty consisted of 10 Articles, embodying political, territorial, and economic stipulations which involved recognition of the "Ukrainian Popular Republic" as an independent State, with, however, only its western boundary provisionally delimited; and, although by the fact of the Austro-German invasion of Southern Russia, the remaining Ukrainian frontiers were still fluid at the signature of the Treaty, the Republic was compelled to assume in respect of the Central

Powers a proportionate share of the obligations entered into by the former Russian Empire. These obligations and a number of technical questions arising out of the war were dealt with in a Supplementary Treaty of 28 Articles, which formed part of the Treaty as a whole.

The Main Treaty, after setting out that the contracting parties were determined thenceforth to live in "peace and amity," provided in Article II. as regards frontiers that:

(1) Between Austria-Hungary of the one part and the Ukrainian Republic of the other part, in so far as these



COUNT CZERNIN,

Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

two Powers have a common frontier, there shall exist those frontiers which existed before the outbreak of the present war between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Russia.

(2) Further north the boundary of the Ukrainian Republic, beginning at Tarnograd, shall run along the general line Bilgorai, Szozebrzszyn, Krasnotoff, Pugaszoff, Radyn, Meshiretchie, Sarnaki, Melnik, Viseko-Litovsk, Kamenetz-Litovsk, Pruzhany, Lake Vidonoff. The details of this line shall be fixed by a mixed commission in accordance with ethnographic circumstances and with regard for the wishes of the population.

Paragraph 2 represented in effect the cession to the Ukraine of the Russian Government of Kholm, together with the then occupied districts of Volhynia, Grodno and Minsk, including the Lithuanian fortress of Brest, commanding the access to the Pripet marsh-land and situated on the main eastward line from Warsaw. The news of the transfer of Kholm to the Ukraine created a profound sensation among the Poles; in the occupied Kingdom the Provisional authorities resigned; Cracow was draped in black; in Vienna the Polish Club vowed war to the knife on the Govern-





THE SEAT OF THE UKRAINIAN  
GOVERNMENT AT KIEFF.

ment; and associations of Poles the world over protested against this fresh mutilation of the remnant of their native land.

The Government of Kholm was created by the Russians in 1913 out of the old Polish provinces of Lublin and Siedlce; the last of these was wiped off the administrative map and the remainder of its former territory, including the town of Siedlce, was incorporated in the enlarged Government of Lublin. The new Kholm Government was transferred from the jurisdiction of the Vistula Governor-Generalship to the direct control of the Russian Ministry of the Interior. The institution of the new Government was celebrated with great solemnity in September, 1913, when the new government buildings were founded in the presence of a number of official representatives and Nationalist members of the Duma. This act of partition had originated in the Nationalist agitation for the complete suppression of the Vistula Provinces and their incorporation in the Russian Empire. The agitation itself was ostensibly provoked by the results of the Toleration Act of 1905, under cover of which many forcibly converted Poles reverted from Orthodoxy to the Church of Rome. In 1907 M. Stolypin was induced by Orthodox influences to propose the severance of the Kholm district, as an earnest of a more sweeping policy, but it was not until March, 1912, that a majority in the Duma could be found to adopt this proposal.

The area of the Kholm Government which, owing to the presence of patches of the famous "Black Earth," was reasonably fertile, was about 5,200 square miles, and gave the Ukrainians a frontier of about 150 miles with Polish territory. Historically this region formed part of the Polish State as early as the tenth century onwards, and from the fourteenth century

until 1913 it had never ceased to be reckoned as an integral part of Poland. The Vienna Congress in 1815 had allowed it so to remain. The population, which before the war approached 1,000,000, was divided at that time according to Russian and Polish authorities in



PROFESSOR HRUSHEVSKI,  
President of the Ukrainian Rada.

the following proportions of Orthodox and Catholics :

	KHOLM GOVERNMENT.			
	Lublin Districts.		Siedlce Districts.	
	Orth.	Cath.	Orth.	Cath.
Russian :				
Official	255,798	287,655	99,603	134,054
Estimate				
Unofficial	215,545	264,734	83,347	128,383
estimate				
Polish estimate	214,985	322,836	75,066	150,645

The discrepancies in the above table, which takes no separate account of the various national elements other than Russian and Polish, sufficiently illuminate the extraordinary local divergencies that German diplomacy affected to solve by a stroke of the pen in assigning the whole of this region as an accommodation to the Ukraine. The sole concession that was made to Polish sentiment was the vague promise that the mixed boundary commission should have power to shift the frontier-line eastward of the points indicated in the treaty.

Article II. of the Ukraine Treaty made in paragraph 3 the further provision that if the Ukrainian Republic should ultimately emerge with a frontier common to it and yet another of the Quadruple Alliance Powers (*i.e.*, if German designs in Poland and Lithuania should be realized), this should be specially delimited.

Articles III. and IV. dealt respectively with the eventual evacuation of Ukrainian territory and the resumption of diplomatic and consular relations. In accordance with the latter stipulation Baron Mumm von Schwarzenstein, sometime German Ambassador at Tokyo, was sent on a special mission to Kieff.

Article V. conformed to the letter of the



KHOLM: THE CATHEDRAL.

“no indemnity” formula by providing that the contracting parties mutually waived all claim to indemnification not only for war costs, but also for war damage; while Article VI. regulated the return of prisoners of war.

The economic provisions of the Ukraine Treaty were contained in Article VII., the longest Article of all, which constituted the kernel of the convention and represented a gigantic forced levy of foodstuffs unparelled even in Prussian war annals. The main provisions of this remarkable act of restraint were as follows :

#### ARTICLE VII.

##### § I.

The contracting parties mutually pledge themselves to renew without delay economic relations and to organize the exchange of goods on the basis of the following principles :—

Until July 31 of the current year a reciprocal exchange of the surpluses of the most important agricultural and industrial products with a view to covering current necessities shall take place in accordance with the following stipulations :—

(a) The quantities and the nature of the products to be exchanged in the aforesaid manner shall be fixed by both contracting parties by means of a commission which shall consist of an equal number of representatives of each side, and shall assemble immediately after the signature of the Peace Treaty.

(b) The prices of the products that are to be exchanged shall be fixed by mutual agreement by means of a commission which shall consist of an equal number of representatives of each side.

(c) Payment shall be made in gold on the following basis :—

1,000 German Imperial Marks in Gold of the Ukrainian Republic=462 Roubles of the former Russian Empire; or 1,000 Austrian and Hungarian Crowns gold=393 Karbowanjec 76 Grosch gold of the Ukrainian Republic=393 Roubles 78 kopeks gold of the former Russian Empire.

(d) The exchange of goods which are to be fixed by the commission provided under Section (a), shall take place through central State agencies.

The exchange of such products as are not listed by the above-mentioned commission shall take place in the ordinary way of free trade, subject to the prescriptions of the Provisional Treaty of Commerce provided in the following §II.

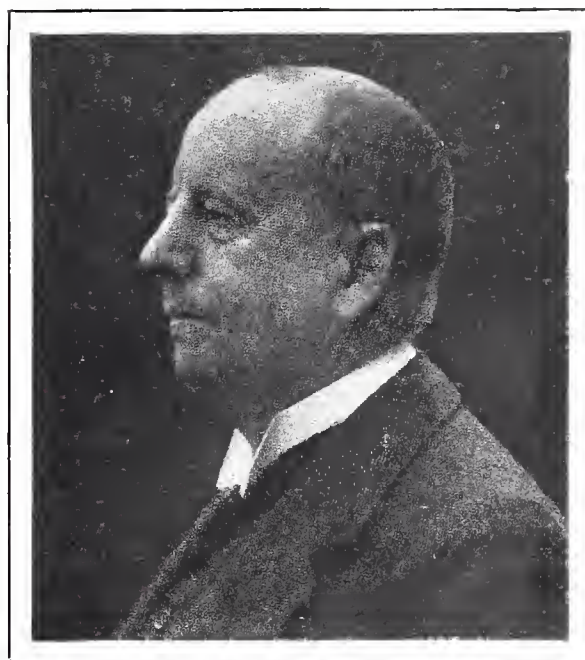
#### § II.

#### PROVISIONAL TREATY OF COMMERCE.

##### A.—WITH GERMANY.

So far as is not otherwise provided in § I, economic relations between the contracting parties shall provisionally be based on the following principles, pending the conclusion of a regular Treaty of Commerce, and in any case until at least six months after the conclusion of peace between Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey, of the one part, and the European States then at war with them, together with the United States of America and Japan, of the other part :—

(a) As regards economic relations between the



BARON MUMM VON SCHWARZENSTEIN,  
German Envoy at Kieff.

German Empire and the Ukrainian Republic, they shall be based on the following provisions of the Russo-German Treaty of Commerce and Shipping of 1894-1904, viz. :—

Articles 1-6; 7, including Tariffs (a) and (b); 8-10; 12; 13-19; further, in the provisions of the Final Protocol, Part I., and Part IV. (as specified in detail).

In this connexion the following points are agreed :—

(1) The Russian General Tariff of January 13-26, 1903, remains in force.

(2) Article 5 shall read as follows :—

“The contracting parties undertake not to impede mutual trade and traffic by means of any import, export, or transport prohibitions whatsoever and to permit free transit.

“Exceptions shall be permissible only in the





foreign possessions, and protectorates shall in this respect be treated on an equality with the Mother-Country.

Austria-Hungary shall lay no claim to the preferences which the Ukrainian Republic accords to another country bound to it by a customs union and bordering either directly on the Ukraine or indirectly through another country bound to her by a Customs union ; or to such preferences as the Ukrainian Republic accords to the colonies, foreign possessions and protectorates of one of the countries bound to it by a Customs union.

The initial provision by which until July 31, 1918, a mutual exchange of surplus products was to be instituted, signified that, in return

had begun, the Central Powers had stipulated in their treaty with Great Russia for the free export of ores ; with the Germans realizing their plan to incorporate the Don and Donetz basins in the Ukraine, the regulation of the mineral traffic would devolve also upon the Southern Republic. In addition the Ukraine had vast ore-deposits of its own in the Krivoi Rog region, on the Dnieper, which were estimated to yield at least 85,000,000 tons of high percentage ore. The whole of this region was



#### THE UKRAINIAN SPECIAL COMMISSION IN BERLIN

To deal with details left unsettled by the Brest-Litovsk treaty.

for such grain as might still be left in the Ukraine, as well as sugar, tobacco, fruit and vegetables, the Central Powers would supply industrial products, in particular agricultural and other machinery, iron and hardware, and other manufactured goods. This exchange was to take place under State control, and central bureaux for this purpose were established in Berlin, Vienna and Kieff. Herr Helfferich was appointed to act as co-ordinator-general for Germany, and General Gröner, the national service expert, was sent as collector-general to the Ukraine. All commodities not included in the terms of the levy were to be freely exchanged in the ordinary way of trade. Before the German march towards the Don

already in German hands by April, 1918, when the invasion of the Crimea was begun. By the beginning of May, however, the dictatorial methods of the German commander-in-chief in the Ukraine, Field-Marshal von Eichhorn, who issued direct orders to the peasantry, had led to a breach with the Rada. The Kieff Government was promptly overthrown by the Germans, who thereupon endeavoured to set up a new authority that would be likely to facilitate the task of collecting the 1,000,000 tons of foodstuffs promised to the enemy populations by the end of July.

Pending the conclusion of a regular treaty of commerce, economic relations between the Ukraine and the Central Powers were to be



governed by a *provisorium*, on the basis of the Russian General Tariff of 1903, which was to remain fixed until 1925, on the one hand, and on the other, of the Russo-German Commercial Treaty of 1894-1904, and of the Austro-Russian Commercial Treaty of 1906, with appropriate modifications in each case. These stipulations recall one of the most striking chapters in the history of German attempts to bring Russia under the Teutonic yoke. The Russo-German Treaty of 1894, which was concluded by Count Witte in pursuance of his exaggerated industrial and financial policy,

Russian naphtha products at the French frontier, concessions were made on French chemical goods, iron and steel, and wines exported to Russia. Simultaneously the Russians applied to German goods their new maximum rates. The Germans replied with a 50 per cent. surcharge on their ordinary tariff, and to this the Russians retorted by a 50 per cent. increase in their maximum rates, while differential rates were also imposed on German ships in Russian ports. The tension on both sides, however, became so great that negotiations were resumed and mutual concessions



KIEFF: THE MONUMENT OF BOGDAN KHMELNITSKY IN THE SOPHIE SQUARE.

cost nearly three years of negotiation and a tariff-war. Alexander III. was already weakening in his grasp of affairs when this treaty was signed. In 1891, as the culminating phase in a decade of protectionist measures that kept step on both sides of the frontier, the Russian tariff on imported goods, especially iron and steel, was made almost prohibitive. At this time Germany was concluding the Caprivi Treaties with Austria and other States, on the basis of a reduction of the Bismarckian duty on wheat and rye from 5 marks to 3.50 marks (per double cwt.). This relief the German Government in 1892 refused to grant to Russian cereals. Russia thereupon resorted to a conventional policy. One of the first fruits of the Dual Alliance was the commercial treaty of 1893, whereby, in return for preferential rates on

were made in respect of agricultural products, on the one hand, and of manufactured goods and raw materials, on the other. Special facilities were granted by Russia for the importation of German coal, iron and steel, and woollen goods over the land-frontier, which had until that time been penalized at the expense of sea-borne goods. In addition the Germans secured an extension to themselves of the concessions made to France.

This treaty, which for the first time for over half a century regularized Russo-German trade relations, was almost immediately followed by an Austro-Russian convention in the form of a most-favoured-nation agreement. Finally, at the end of 1894, as a special gratification for Count Witte, who had fought a hard battle both with his Imperial master and





AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN AND UKRAINIAN SOLDIERS BARTERING DURING THE ARMISTICE.

with his colleagues, the German Imperial Bank, by order of the then Chancellor, Caprivi, raised the embargo on Russian securities which had been imposed by Bismarck in 1887, on political as well as on economic grounds.

The Kaiser was so enthusiastically solicitous for the adoption of the Treaty with Russia by the Reichstag that in a speech at a Parliamentary dinner given by the Chancellor a few weeks before the final treaty debate, Wilhelm II. strongly deprecated Prussian Conservative and Agrarian hostility to the Bill.

In 1901 Prince Bülow introduced the new Tariff which was designed to re-establish the agrarian bias of German economic policy. The new Tariff, which became law in 1902, raised the duties on Russian grain, the new *minimum* duties being made almost equal to the *maximum* duties formerly imposed on grain from countries that had no treaty with Germany. The Russian Government thereupon, in January 1903, armed itself with a new Tariff differentiating between sea-borne goods and those entering by land. But the outbreak and course of the war with Japan put an end to all thought of reprisals that Count Witte might otherwise have been emboldened to threaten. The Germans skilfully turned to account the situation in Russia, aggravated, as it was, by

impending revolution, and, in July, 1904, Count Witte, while on a visit to Prince Bülow at Norderney, was induced to acquiesce in the oppressively-revised provisions of the 1894 Treaty.

Germany was the first country with which Russia signed a commercial treaty, and the Treaty of 1894-1904 was the first step in the transformation of Russia into a German *Hinterland*. Karl Jentsch, the German economist, wrote in 1894 :

For us Russia is not an independent State ; she remains what were for our ancestors in olden days the Slav lands from the Inn and the Elbe, territories predestined by nature to serve as colonies for us.

His theory was that 10,000,000 Germans should be introduced, if necessary by force, into Russia in order to develop the land which the Russians were incapable of developing themselves. Lieber, the Centre leader, declared that by concluding the Treaty of 1894 Wilhelm II. had achieved a victory as brilliant as that of his grandfather in 1870 ; while other German politicians described the Russo-German and Austro-Russian Treaties as a new *Drei Kaiser Bund* that would endure for all time. Well might the Germans celebrate as a victory an arrangement under which German notes were accepted for gold in payment of Customs' dues ; under which new railway





IN PETROGRAD DURING THE GERMAN ADVANCE: THE RED GUARD AT SMOLNY.

lines and river routes were opened, while the trade of Petrograd as a port was ruined; and under which the "dumping" of German goods was bound to contribute to the inevitable upheaval.

Russian economists for their part laid stress upon the fundamentally aggressive character of German economic aims, and pointed out that, although Germany was Russia's largest customer and purveyor, the dimensions of commercial transactions did not in any way attest their advantage. The revised version of the 1894 Treaty came into force in March 1906, and was due to run until December 31, 1917. Already five years earlier systematic preparations were being made to secure a radical overhauling of its provisions. "Shall Russia become a German colony?" was the question of the hour. By the beginning of 1914 the work of the special Tariff Committee appointed by the Russian Ministry of Commerce had so far advanced that a new Tariff Bill could be drafted and the expectation was that this measure would be tabled in the Duma during 1915. The proposed amendments were so drastic that a fresh Customs conflict with Germany was regarded as inevitable. Of this prospect the Germans were fully aware, and they decided to take their own measures to

forestall it. Russians never doubted the paramount part that was played in Germany's decision to go to war by the fear of a reversal of Count Witte's economic experiment.

The course of the war, and especially its prolongation beyond German calculations, tended at first to obscure the main German objective. Indeed, the Germans themselves for a time, so long as the Russian front remained unbroken, were groping for a way round in Asia Minor and elsewhere. But the pressure of the Allied blockade, which became effective with the entry of America into the lists, combined with the break-up of the Russian Empire, naturally led the Germans to follow the line of least resistance, and this road, as it happened, coincided with their own aspirations. Prussian Junkerdom, not only the thousand or so more or less great families whose entailed estates had for a generation past been mortgaged up to the two-thirds limit that the law allowed, but every landholder, member or not of the Agrarian League, had long been made to feel that the "line of the Elbe" was becoming a line of political as well as of economic division. Like the "Main line," the historic barrier to the union of North and South, the "Elbe line" had somehow to go.

Historic stepping-stones for the realization of these aims were to be found in the Russian Baltic Provinces of Courland, Livland and Estland, which from time immemorial formed the key to the Baltic and one of the main gateways to the *Hinterland* of Russia. In the relations of the Baltic peoples Riga and the Dvina have played a part no whit inferior to that of Antwerp and the Scheldt in the rivalries among the Western Powers. The tenacious aboriginal population has survived seven centuries of bondage under the Baltic Barons, direct descendants of the scum of crusading Germany, whose loosening hold upon the subject race was now to be confirmed and whose undeveloped lands were to be turned into German plantations. This, indeed, was the meaning of the clause (Articles XVIII. and XIX.) of the Supplementary Treaty with the Ukraine, which provided that for a period of 10 years after the signature of the treaty nationals of either party who had settled within the territory of the other party should be free both to return to their country of origin (at six months' notice if they were tenant-holders), and if naturalized to resume their former nationality. Before the war the so-called German "Colonists" in Russia were estimated at about 2,000,000. This number subsequent vicissitudes reduced to 1,500,000.

The total land owned by these colonists was estimated at about 25,000,000 acres, and the value of it at anything up to £250,000,000. In order to promote Prussian annexationist designs, it was proposed to buy out these colonists, and to transfer them bodily to the Baltic Provinces, where they were to be planted out in the absence of the refugee population. Hence the German stipulation at Brest that any referendum in the occupied territories should be instituted only a year after the signature of peace. During this period, the "Germanization" of the country could be accomplished, the economic yoke would have been firmly fixed on the native shoulders, the greater part of the soil would be in German hands, and there would be little danger of shocking the European conscience by any brutal act of "annexation." Bismarck, who lived in comparatively unenlightened days, used to sigh: "If only we lived in the time of Charlemagne, we could transfer the Alsatians to Posen, and plant the inhabitants of that country between the Rhine and the Vosges." The spacious days of Charlemagne had mani-

festly returned. The expropriation of a nation—for the Letts were that still and a thorn in the flesh to their German masters—was to become an accomplished fact; and then, at long last, for Lithuania was also to be "Germanized," the Eastern Marches would be removed from their uncomfortable proximity to Berlin. The Baltic Barons immediately offered to place at the disposal of the German Government one third of their estates, and there were estimated to be considerably over 10,000,000 acres of untenanted (*sic*) land available in this region alone. The average price of land in the Baltic Provinces might, it was thought, be calculated at £20 an acre (another gift for the



TROTSKY.



distressed agrarian); and it was computed that about £100 per head would represent the average loan money that the Government would need to find. The realization of these plans would consummate the dreams of the Rösickes, the Oldenburgs and other agrarian leaguers,



A UKRAINIAN SOLDIER.

and of the Schiemanns, the Ballods, and other Baltic "transfugees" who preached in and out of season that Prussia-Germany was responsible for the fate of the "oppressed" German colonists in Russia, and that the only way to strengthen the Outer Marches was to transfer their landmarks to the confines of Western Slavdom.

The Brest Treaties, both the North and the South Russian agreements, were designed in their economic provisions not only to fix more firmly the yoke reimposed in 1904, but also to neutralize by anticipation the eventual effect of the resolutions adopted by the Allied Conference at Paris in June 1916, recommending denial to enemy Powers, for an agreed period, of most-favoured-nation treatment; interchange between the Allied countries of their natural resources; and appropriate measures to render the Allied countries independent of the enemy Powers in raw materials and manufactured articles essential to the normal

development of their economic activities. In this connexion the Germans attached special importance to § IV. of Article VII. of the Brest Treaty, which provided that neither of the contracting parties should lay claim to the preferential treatment which either might accord to States immediately bordering on its territories or indirectly bordering thereon through another country with which it was in Customs' union. By implication, therefore, Germany, for example, might, on the other hand, claim as a matter of course to participate in the benefits of any commercial arrangement that either Muscovite or Ukrainian Russia might be tempted to make with any State not immediately bordering on Russian territory or with its Allies, colonies, or dependencies. In other words, Germany hereby sought to manoeuvre herself into a position in which she would be on equal terms with the Entente Powers and, above all, with America after the war. American competition in particular was feared by the Germans in Russia, and they were keenly alive to American attempts to divert American trade with Russia to the trans-Asiatic route, from Hamburg, Berlin, and Leipzig, through which American goods were allowed to filter until the war.

German critics of the new Hansa policy pointed out that the assimilation, even on paper, of Germany with any colonies that she might possess after the war was calculated to act as a direct incentive to the British Empire to enter into a Customs' union, a consummation which Germany had consistently striven to postpone. It was represented that the British Empire, with its inclusive range of raw materials and its highly-developed industries, approximated most closely to the ideal of a self-contained State, and that anything that tended to knit its parts more compactly together was calculated gravely to prejudice Germany's economic existence, the true bias of which had been emphasized by the war. In other words, the maintenance of British free trade was vital to Germany, and in its survival lay her sole hope of recuperating her war losses. But it was the object of the Berlin-and-Beyond school to show that if Germany could command an open market in the Russian East, she could become at least as self-supporting as the British Empire.

Rumania in the south, which had been bled white for the immediate benefit of Austria-Hungary, and Finland in the north were pre-

destined to form the flank-guards of the German advance. For many years past Finnish discontent had been artificially fostered by German influence, and at Lübeck and other sympathetic centres trade agencies with an altruistic exterior prepared the way for German penetration. Under the 1904 revised Treaty with Russia Germany secured the assurance that before any assimilation of the Finnish to the Russian Tariff she would receive at least two years' notice; meanwhile Russia was induced to declare that this assimilation would in all probability be only gradual and at long intervals. As early as January 4, 1918, at the very moment when the Ukraine was being drawn into the German net at Brest, the Kaiser in Berlin signified his readiness to recognize the new Finnish Republic; and 48 hours after the signature of the last Brest Treaty the Finns had been bound to Germany by a separate economic treaty that practically transferred Finnish commerce and industry into German hands, while a German expeditionary force completed the conquest of the Gulf of Finland.

The German occupation of Helsingfors in April, following upon the German landing in the Åland Islands and the capture of Reval and Narva, raised the Northern question in a form in which it had not presented itself

since the Treaty of Stolbovo, exactly 300 years earlier, which completed the circle of Swedish possessions in Finland, Pomerania, Livland and Estland, by giving Gustavus Adolphus the provinces of Karelia and Ingermanland, the modern Petrograd district.

The Kaiser, who had repeatedly given extravagant and unhistorical expression to his joy at the reunion of the Baltic Provinces with "the old mother-country," promptly took steps to make good his boast that "as far as human judgment can discern, the Germanization of the Baltic lands is now made secure for all time." Deputations from the three Baltic Diets were received by the Emperor and his Chancellor in Berlin. The Livlanders and Estlanders were assured during April, 1918, that their prayer for union with the German Empire would be favourably considered, while at the end of that month the Courlanders were informed that the Kaiser was prepared to recognize the Duchy of Courland as a free and independent State, and to conclude in the name of the German Empire such State treaties with Courland as would guarantee a close economic and military connexion. The native Letts, both of Courland and Livland, protested from the dim recesses of their Russian refuge against these proceedings;



RELEASED GERMAN PRISONERS FROM KIEFF.

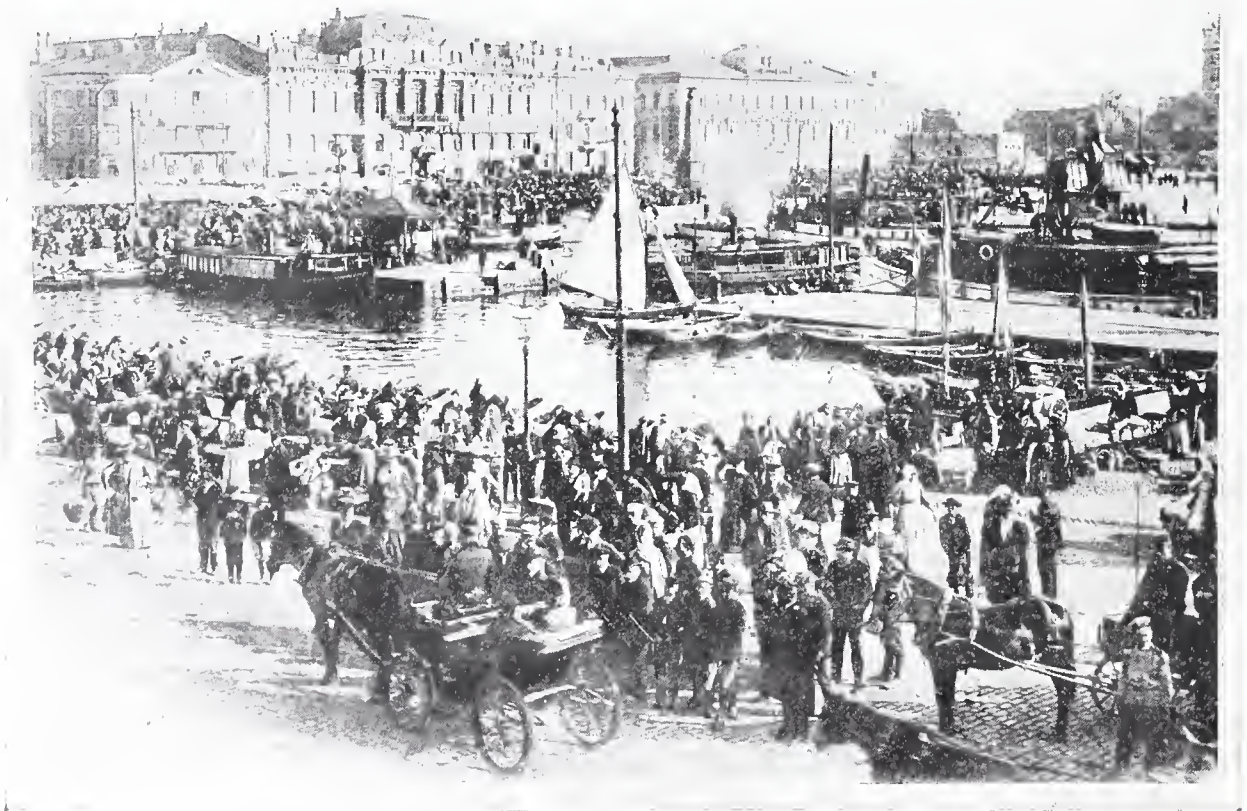
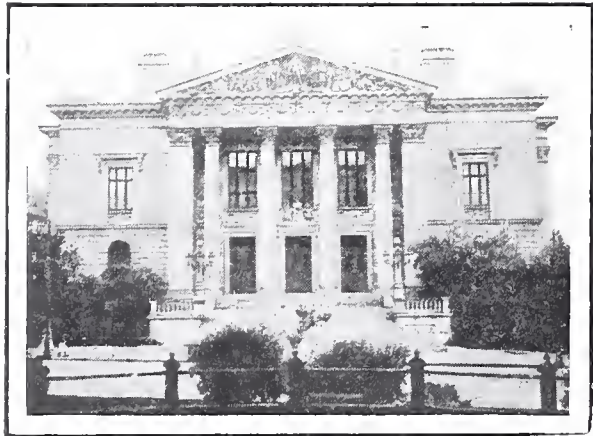


and the Ests sent a delegation to Denmark and to the Western Powers to plead the cause of the unrepresented and unconsulted 90 per cent. of the Baltic population. Early in May these delegates visited London.

The international *status* of the Baltic Provinces as defined by the Brest Treaty of March 5 was as follows: Courland, together with Riga, the capital of Livland, was altogether severed from Russia, and that Power, as represented by the Bolsheviks, undertook to refrain from all interference in the internal affairs of that region and to allow Germany and Austria to decide the future fate of these territories (as well as of Lithuania and Congress Poland), in agreement with the local population. German interpretations of the Treaty differed as to whether Riga was to

remain in Livland or was to be incorporated in Courland, or whether it was destined to become a "Free State," on the model of Hamburg, Bremen and Lübeck, in consideration of its historic past and of its modern economic importance as the channel, before the war, of one-sixth of the whole of Russia's foreign trade. All that became known regarding the sentiments of the city since the German occupation was General Hoffmann's statement at Brest that on December 24, 1917, the Municipal Council had expressed itself in favour of separation from Russia and that the Great Merchants' Guild, together with 60 other associations, had expressed themselves in a similar sense. As for Livland and Estland the Brest Treaty provided for their evacuation by the Russians and for their occupation by a German police force, "until their security is guaranteed by their own national institutions and until their own State organization is restored." Finally, the Eastern frontier of Livland was transferred farther into Russian territory so as to terminate in the south-east at Lievenhof, about 30 miles higher up the Dvina than the pre-war boundary.

The German Imperial Chancellor, Count Hertling, in a speech in the Reichstag a fort-



HELSINGFORS: THE HARBOUR. Small picture: THE SENATE HOUSE.

night after the signature of the Brest-Treaty, explained its bearing on the Baltic Provinces. These provinces having severed their connexion with Russia, it was incumbent upon the German Empire, under whose protection they had placed themselves, to give them a new State form, corresponding to their situation and *Kultur*, with due regard for German interests. Of Courland's "desire to lean on the German Empire" he "thankfully and joyfully" took cognizance, while reserving a final decision as to the political form until local conditions had been consolidated and until the constitutionally competent factors on all sides had decided upon their future attitude. When, in accordance with the provisions of the treaty, the prerequisites of public order in Livland and Estland had been established, "the moment for a new political orientation will then have come also for these countries." The Chancellor expressed the hope that "they, too, will then place themselves in close and friendly relationship to the German Empire, but in such a way that this will not exclude peaceable and friendly relations with Russia."

The measure of "self-determination" in store for the Baltic Provinces was to be inferred from Herr von Kühlmann's exposition at Brest of the German doctrine on the subject. According to the German theory, the right of self-determination might be exercised, either through existing representative institutions; or, failing these, through new institutions created for the purpose. Above all, there must be no leap in the dark, such as a plebiscite or a referendum would constitute. M. Trotsky did not demur to the suggestion that the opinion of the so-called Diets in the Baltic Provinces represented an economically and socially important section of the population, but he strongly protested against the suggestion that assemblies representing only from three to seven per cent. of the inhabitants should be invested with constituent powers. Even if these territories had not been in German military occupation, he would still have maintained that the will of a people as a whole could not be expressed by economically privileged groups.

Lithuania typified the State in which, according to the German definition, representative institutions had to be created for the exercise of the right of self-determination. From the moment of their occupation of the Lithuanian territories three years earlier the Germans had endeavoured to separate

Lithuania from Poland, and by all means to keep them apart. Their plan had been to create "a great Lithuanian State" under German influence, and in this policy they had, as in the Ukraine, the support of the local nationalists.

With the removal of the Eastern Marches beyond the Vistula into an Eldorado of cheap land and cheap labour, rich in conscripts and



COUNT KEYSERLINGK,  
German Commissioner for the Baltic Provinces.

in votes, the Junkers would be able to afford to abandon the "line of the Elbe" and to throw "Neu Deutschland," with its capital at Lodz, as a sop to the Industrialists and Socialists. With its flanks securely based upon the Baltic shore right up to the Gulf of Finland and in the south upon an Austrianized Ukraine, Junkerdom could then fulfil its mission by advancing through Lithuania its outposts still farther into the Land of Promise.

"Their knees are on our chest"—these were the words in which M. Lenin urged upon his followers the acceptance of the German terms, on the ground that Soviet Russia needed a "respite" in order to prepare for the decisive struggle against the *bourgeoisie* and Imperialism. M. Trotsky, who seems to have feared, not altogether without reason, that the Germans contemplated imposing an indemnity, or its equivalent, of £800,000,000 in gold, was able to visualize for his colleagues the contraction of All the Russias to the almost sixteenth-century dimensions of the 26 Great Russian Governments of Archangel, Astrakhan, Kazan, Kostroma, Moscow, Novgorod, Olonetz, Orenburg, Orloff, Pensa, Perm, Petrograd, Pskoff.



Riazan, Samara, Saratoff, Simbirsk, Smolensk, Tamboff, Tula, Tver, Ufa, Viatka, Vladimir, Vologda and Yaroslav. And, bitterest blow of all, the Bolsheviks by Article II. of their Treaty with the four enemy Powers, were compelled to refrain from all agitation or provocation against the States or Governments of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey. With the weight of their agitation thrown back upon themselves the Bolsheviks gave a fresh impulse to their propaganda in Siberia, where the situation created by the Brest negotiations and the release of Austrian and German prisoners of war prompted Japan and other Allied Powers to land marines at Vladivostok for police purposes and to guard the large supplies of ammunition and grain stored there. For a season during March, 1918, the Allies in consultation with the United States discussed the feasibility of offering the saner elements of the Russian population a rallying point amidst the surrounding chaos. It was suggested that Japan would be best qualified to give this support. The suggestion,

however, hung fire, no doubt in tacit obedience to the motives that prompted President Wilson, on the eve of the ratification of the Brest Treaty at Moscow, to telegraph to the Soviet Government his sympathy. In a Message to Congress on January 8, 1918, the President declared that "the treatment accorded to Russia by her sister-nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their goodwill, of their comprehension of her needs, as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy." In accordance with this high standard of democratic solidarity, President Wilson instructed the United States Ambassador in Petrograd, Mr. Francis, on the evacuation of the capital during February before the threatened advance of the invading Germans, to remain in Russia and to take up his residence at Vologda, a convenient junction east of Petrograd. The British Ambassador, Sir George Buchanan, returned to England on leave, shortly after the New Year, after seven years' distinguished service in Russia.



GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS,  
HELSINGFORS.

## CHAPTER CCXXXVI.

# THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES (III.)

STRATEGIC SITUATION IN SEPTEMBER, 1917—REOPENING OF THE BATTLE—ADVANCE ON THE GRAVENSTAFEL SPUR—THE STROOMBEEK CROSSED AND THE SPUR TURNED—ADVANCE ON THE ZONNEBEKE HEIGHTS—RESULTS OF GOUGH'S ATTACK—PLUMER'S ASSAULT ON THE VELDHOEK AND ZANDVOORDE RIDGES—POLYGON WOOD ENTERED—FIGHTING ON THE MENIN ROAD—SHREWSBURY FOREST CAPTURED—SIXT VON ARMIN'S COUNTER-ATTACKS REPULSED—ADVANCE OF SEPTEMBER 20—ZONNEBEKE CARRIED AND PART OF PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE GAINED—MORE GERMAN COUNTER-ATTACKS—RAIDS IN SEPTEMBER.

IT has been seen that, owing partly to the bad weather and partly to the improvement in the methods of the German Higher Command, the great battle for the Passchendaele Ridge and the Plain of Belgium west of the Lys had not, during August, 1917, yielded the results expected by Sir Douglas Haig and General Anthoine. The Ypres salient had, however, been everywhere enlarged and the question arose whether we should be content for the present with our gains. The victory won by General Guillaumat at Verdun on August 20-21 removed any immediate danger of Verdun and the Heights of the Meuse falling into the hands of the enemy. On August 24, General Cadorna had completed his advance in the Julian Alps by the capture of Monte Santo. The impending collapse of the Russian Army was not fully foreseen at this time, and it was still desirable to prevent the Germans throwing their troops from the Western front against Russia. The decision was, therefore, taken to renew the struggle. Although Riga was captured by the enemy on September 3, and General Korniloff's attempt to galvanize Kerensky into military activity collapsed on September 14, some weeks were still to elapse before Russia could be definitely said to have gone out of the war, nor at the beginning of September

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was there reason to expect that Italy in the immediate future would need French and British assistance. Moreover, the long-drawn death grapple for the Chemin des Dames Ridge was still undecided, and, in view of the intention of General Pétain to end it in favour of the Allies, it was necessary to keep the Armies of Prince Rupprecht fully employed and to prevent him from reinforcing the German Crown Prince in the Laon region.

Under these circumstances, Sir Hubert Gough and Sir Herbert Plumer made their preparations for another thrust at General Sixt von Armin's line. The lessons of the desperate fighting since July 31 had been thoroughly digested; the nature of the new German tactics was understood, and appropriate methods for overcoming them had been devised. The bad weather had hindered Sixt Von Armin as well as Sir Douglas Haig. The former, owing to it, had been unable seriously to strengthen his position by artificial means, and, in this connexion, it is significant of the shifts to which he was reduced that one of our derelict Tanks in the swampy region of Inverness Copse was made the kernel of a concrete redoubt.\* That the German troops had been shaken by the recent fighting was apparent

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\* See post, p. 57.



from a captured regimental order which ran as follows :—

From reports received from the front line and support battalions I learn that a large number of men, some pleading sickness, are leaving their posts without orders. This is especially the case in the supporting battalions, although they have little to fear from artillery fire as compared with the front line battalions. This causes a dangerous weakening of fighting strength, and is a great disadvantage to the fighting troops. All commanders, especially those of battalions and companies, must do their utmost to keep up the *moral* of their troops and maintain discipline.

Unposted letters found on prisoners con-

is nothing left to eat I shall go back on my own responsibility. That's flat.

The terror inspired by our artillery was reflected in several other letters. Below are passages from four of them :

Men of all arms say that the battle here is worse than the battle of Arras. Our artillery is scarcely able to fire a round. Matters have come to such a pass that our artillery moves forward in the night, unlimbers, and lets loose some thousands of gas shells, and retires before dawn. It is no longer war and borders close on murder, so that the object of every arm that enters the battle is to play itself out as soon as possible in order to be withdrawn.



[Official photograph.]

#### LOADING DUCK-BOARDS For lining the bottoms of trenches.

firmed the natural deduction to be drawn from the above document. Here is an extract from one of them :—

I went yesterday with a ration party, but for the last time. I won't go again. They can do what they like with me. It is no longer human. The beasts are better off. The officers don't notice it. They have enough to eat and drink. No wonder so many of the Bavarians deserted at Arras.

Another German soldier wrote :—

During the night I lay with another man in a concrete dug-out full of water to be out of the way. It is the first time I ever shirked duty, but it is mere stupidity to be too conscientious in such matters. Many of the company have cleared out, or have never come into line at all. The only sergeant left in the company has reported sick. Everybody does his utmost to get out of the way, and quite right, too. Life is precious. Rations will last till to-morrow morning. When there

Since that I have been in the trenches near Ypres, where the offensive is now taking place. Drun-fire has shot everything to pieces. There is almost nothing more of the trenches to be seen. Up to now I have escaped with my life, but we have had great losses, half my company being killed or wounded. It is a terrible life, which will soon become unbearable. He is best off who gets a bullet and does not need to knock around any longer. The Englishman blows everything to bits that he can see, and bombards all the ground up to 10 or 15 kilometres (about 6 to 9½ miles) behind the front line.

We are now in the front line, which is better than the third line, because we do not get so much artillery fire here, but it is scarcely endurable. Nothing but the smell of corpses, and here and there one can see arms and legs and whole corpses. We sit here in shell-holes and listen to the shells going over our heads, and expect every minute either death or attack.

The situation is unelancholy. Our company have suffered heavy losses during the one day we have been





SCENE NEAR ZILLEBEKE.

*[Official photograph.]*

here. We are in a support trench a few hundred metres behind the front line. The English shell the entire area incessantly with the heaviest guns, and the ground is one mass of shell-holes, some large enough to build houses in. To-morrow night we go into the front line, which is battered to pieces and consists merely of shell-holes. Death lies in wait for us like a fox for its prey.

More than ever the success of the British in the battle about to be delivered depended on the artillery preparation. Armed with their new type of light machine-gun weighing some 30 lbs., which a man could carry under his arm, a handful of Germans garrisoning "pill boxes" impregnable to all but direct hits from the heaviest shells could hold up an advance. To obtain direct hits our guns and howitzers had to be brought closer to their targets. In face of the fact that the enemy's reserves were now at a distance from the front line, this was also necessary for another reason. These had to be brought under fire, and it was necessary

to isolate the "pill box" area by barrages thrown some distance behind them. For all these reasons the heavy guns had to be brought nearer to the front so as to shorten their range.

Although the weather became fine on September 3 and, with interludes of rain, remained so up to the day of September 20, when the Third Battle of Ypres reopened, the difficulty of moving the guns forward was still very great. The ground had become a collection of puddles with little or no solid earth between. The crater-pitted roads seemed like strings of small ponds. What had been brooks in ordinary times had become miniature rivers. To bring forward under the German shell fire the artillery we needed was, therefore, a long and difficult task. Nor was the work of the Engineers and Pioneers less arduous. Roads had to be repaired, wire entanglements con-



ADVANCED POSTS IN SHELL-CRATERS.

*[Official photograph.]*





[Australian official photograph.]

#### MULES CARRYING WATER OVER CORDUROY TRACKS THROUGH BOGGY LAND.

structed. To ensure the co-ordination of the gun-fire, telegraphs and telephones were placed beneath the soppy surface of the ground. For example, the New Zealanders alone laid 30,000 yards of cables at a depth of from 6 to 10 feet. The inevitable delay gave Sixt von Armin time to receive a number of batteries from the Russian front and to prepare defensive positions in the plain beyond the Passehendaele Ridge.

While our guns were being transported to their new and carefully hidden pits, the British and French aircraft and the Royal Naval Air Service were constantly engaged in observing, photographing, fighting and bombing.

In the course of this fighting the Allies sustained a serious loss in the death of Guynemer, the great French airman. Captain Guynemer was, like our Captain Ball, whom he resembled in many points, a paladin of the air. He was one of those beings whose bodies would, at first glance seem hardly equal to the great soul they hold within them. Although twice rejected for want of physical strength, he made up his mind he *would* be an aviator, in despite of all his disadvantages, and an aviator he did eventually become.

Probably his was beyond the usual daring

of the ordinary tyro, for he began by smashing up his machine, and came down six or seven times more before he was thoroughly at home in his new career. But then he became—Guynemer. His accidents and practices taught him much. He made many little improvements in his machine, and above all he elaborated his methods which made him so redoubtable an adversary. He first became known to the public in 1916. In 1915, between July and December, he had already brought down four opponents. But beginning with the New Year he rapidly increased his score. He added thirteen up to September 23. On November 10 of that year he brought down a brace of German aeroplanes, and two more on the 22nd. His successes went on increasing during the next year. On both January 22 and 24 he destroyed two enemy machines, and on May 25, 1917, he conquered four. Such a score for one day was then quite unsurpassed. Of these the first two fell with only a minute's interval, one to the north of Corbeny, the other near Juvinicourt. The third was crushed down at Courlanden, near Fismes, while the fourth was set on fire and fell in the gardens of Guignicourt.

Guynemer belonged to the squadron known



as the Cigognes (Storks) whose numerous victories round Verdun, on the Somme, in Lorraine, at the battle of the Aisne, and during the fighting to the north had gained them much renown. On September 10 a French *communiqué* mentioned that Captain Guynemer had raised to "50" (really 54 by September 6) the number of German machines which he had destroyed. His usual habit was to work with one comrade, and on September 11, at 9.30 a.m., he had started for the southern fringe of the Forest of Houthulst with Second Lieutenant Bozon Verdurard as soon as the mist had cleared away sufficiently to enable them to see the country round Langemarck. Their object was to observe for the French artillery, and if possible successfully engage some of the German aviators. It was not long before a hostile two-seater was noted. The two Frenchmen manœuvred so as to get into a favourable position for attack. But while they were thus engaged eight of the enemy's single-seaters were approaching. Absorbed in the combat, Guynemer did not perceive them. Verdurard sought to draw them off, and succeeded in doing so to some extent, but when he had accomplished his task and returned to find his companion—he was nowhere to be



[From "L'Illustration,"

**CAPTAIN GUYNEMER,**  
The famous French airman.

The death of Guynemer coincided with that of one of the best German flyers, Lieutenant Hohendorf, who was shot down by British airmen about the same time. Hohendorf had received the Order Pour le Mérite in the previous July. He had earned it for services rendered not wholly in air fighting. In 1913 he had presented himself as a pupil at a flying school in France. While there he was discovered by two workmen in the act of taking careful measurements of the internal parts of a machine and recording them in a notebook. Before the workmen were able to communicate with the authorities he had made his escape.



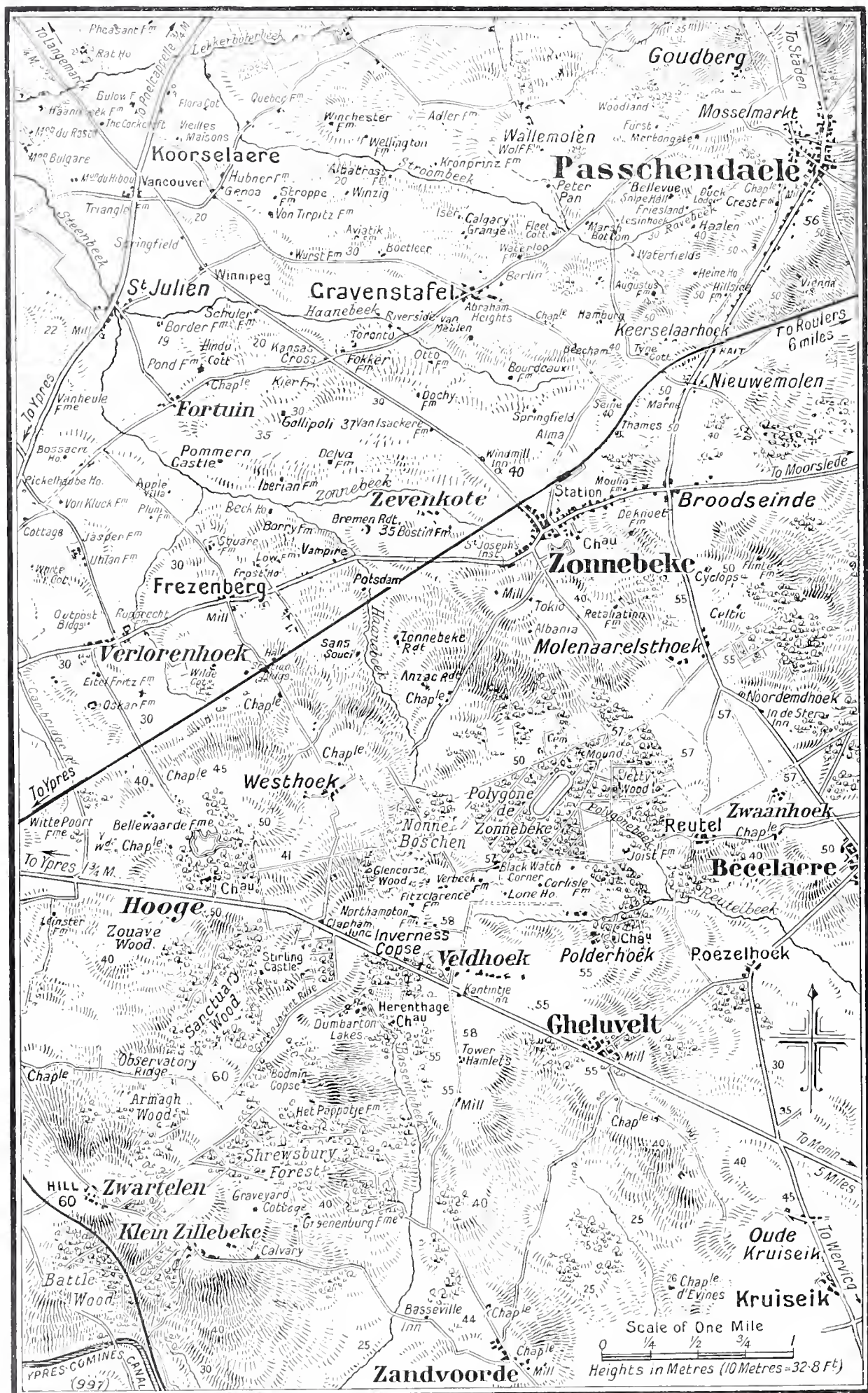
[Official photograph.

**DIGGING A DRAIN.**

seen. After searching about and finding no trace of the lost aviator he returned to his aerodrome hoping to find his comrade there before him. But in vain. Some little time afterwards from German sources it was learned that Guynemer had been shot through the head and had fallen close to Poelcappelle, 800 yards from the cemetery where he was buried by his foes with military honours.

The battle of September 20 was preceded by some minor engagements in the Ypres salient. On September 1 we raided the enemy's dug-outs east of Wytschaete, and in the night of September 4-5 repulsed a raid east of Klein Zillebeke. After dark on the 6th, Gough attacked the German lines north of Frezenberg; his troops made some progress, but, under the pressure of violent counter-attacks, were forced to retreat. There was some patrol fighting between Frezenberg and Langemarck to the north-east of St. Julien in the night of the 7th-8th, and Langemarck was heavily shelled by the German artillery. The next night raids were beaten off by Plumer's men south of Hollebeke, and in the early





PASSCHENDAELE AND THE MENIN ROAD.



morning of the 9th, the enemy, attacking our trenches in Inverness Copse, was unsuccessful. North-east of St. Julien, Gough slightly improved his position. After sunset there were encounters south-east of St. Julien and, near our junction with Anthoine's army, south-east of St. Janshoek. On the morning of the 12th the enemy, who had been bombarding the French lines from Drie Grachten to north and east of Bixschoote, violently shelled a mile of Gough's front north and north-west of Langemarek. A subsequent attack by Würtembergers in considerable strength was repulsed after severe fighting. The next day (September 14) Gough progressed near the Winnipeg Redoubt, north-east of St. Julien. A German counter-attack was dispersed by the British barrage. On September 15 a London regiment, north of Inverness Copse, captured a strong point, and repulsed the enemy trying to retake it at dawn on the 16th. About the same time a German attempt to storm our trenches north of Langemarek failed. Hostile raids in the neighbourhood of the Ypres-Comines Canal and east of Messines, a few hours before, had resulted in our losing some prisoners. On the 18th, troops of the York and Lancaster Regiment raided the German positions in Inverness Copse, and Gough, east of St. Julien, made a slight advance. Thus the advantages and disadvantages to our men were fairly evenly divided. The fighting was severe but desultory.

By this date the artillery preparation for the blow about to be struck by Gough and Plumer was in full swing. From September 14, when it had commenced, it had been fairly clear to the Germans, as was shown in their *communiqué* of September 19, that an attack was expected.

In the first and second phases of the Third Battle of Ypres the French under General Anthoine had taken an active part; in the third phase it was decided that they should mark time, while Gough and Plumer engaged in three limited offensives. The front selected for the first of the attacks extended from the Ypres-Staden Railway, north of Langemarek to the Ypres-Comines Canal north of Hollebeke, a distance of over eight miles. The front of the second attack was less than six miles long, and ran from the north-east of St. Julien to the region of Tower Hamlets, a mile or so south of Veldhoek, which village is on the Ypres-Menin road. The front of the

third offensive was about seven miles in length between the Ypres-Staden railway and the Ypres-Menin road, but was accompanied by a subsidiary operation south of that causeway on a front of a mile or so.

By these stages our line was to be established on the Passchendaele Ridge and the well-marked Gravenstafel Spur. That spur



[Official portrait by Francis Dodd.]

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR HUBERT DE LA  
POER GOUGH, K.C.B.

Commanded the Fifth Army in the Third Battle  
of Ypres.

protruded north-westwards from the ridge toward Langemarek, and offered a defensible feature along which our front could be placed with its right flank thrown somewhat back.

The third phase of the struggle, therefore, consisted of three separate actions, which began on September 20, September 26 and October 4 respectively. As, however, Sixt von Armin violently counter-attacked between those dates, they may be regarded as phases of a single battle lasting a fortnight.

Compared with the three days' fighting of the first, and the one day's fighting of the second phase, the third phase was a much more prolonged encounter, and tested to the utmost the qualities of the opposing forces. It was partially marred by the failure of Gough's left wing north-east of Langemarek to reach its objectives on September 20. Whether or



no this check caused any change in Sir Douglas Haig's plans has not been disclosed.

It will be recollected that after his experiences in the battle of August 16, Sir Douglas had entrusted the attack upon the whole of the high land crossed by the Ypres-Menin road to Sir Herbert Plumer, whose left wing by September 19 had been prolonged from south of the Zillebeke-Zandvoorde road to the Westhoek Ridge. Sir Hubert Gough's Fifth Army was deployed thence across the Ypres-Roulers and Ypres-Staden Railways to the north west of Langemark, where on the south bank of the Broenbeek it joined the French line.

At first Gough's troops west of the Ypres-Staden Railway were to remain, like Anthoine's Army, on the defensive. Apart from the British forces beyond that railway, the whole of Gough's Army, with a large part of Plumer's, was to be employed in the operations to be described.

At last the weather seemed promising for the British. On September 18 only a little rain fell. The next day, Wednesday, September 19, the sun shone, and a gale blew over Flanders, helping to dry the ground. But the bad luck which had persistently dogged the British footsteps since the afternoon of July 31 was

speedily again encountered. After sunset, about 9 p.m., a steady downpour set in, and when dawn broke on Thursday, September 20 a thick mist hung over the water-logged plain and ridges. Low clouds and a drizzling rain made flying almost impossible for the first two hours of the battle. Nevertheless our airmen, from a low altitude, bombed a hostile aerodrome near Courtrai and fired at bodies of German infantry.

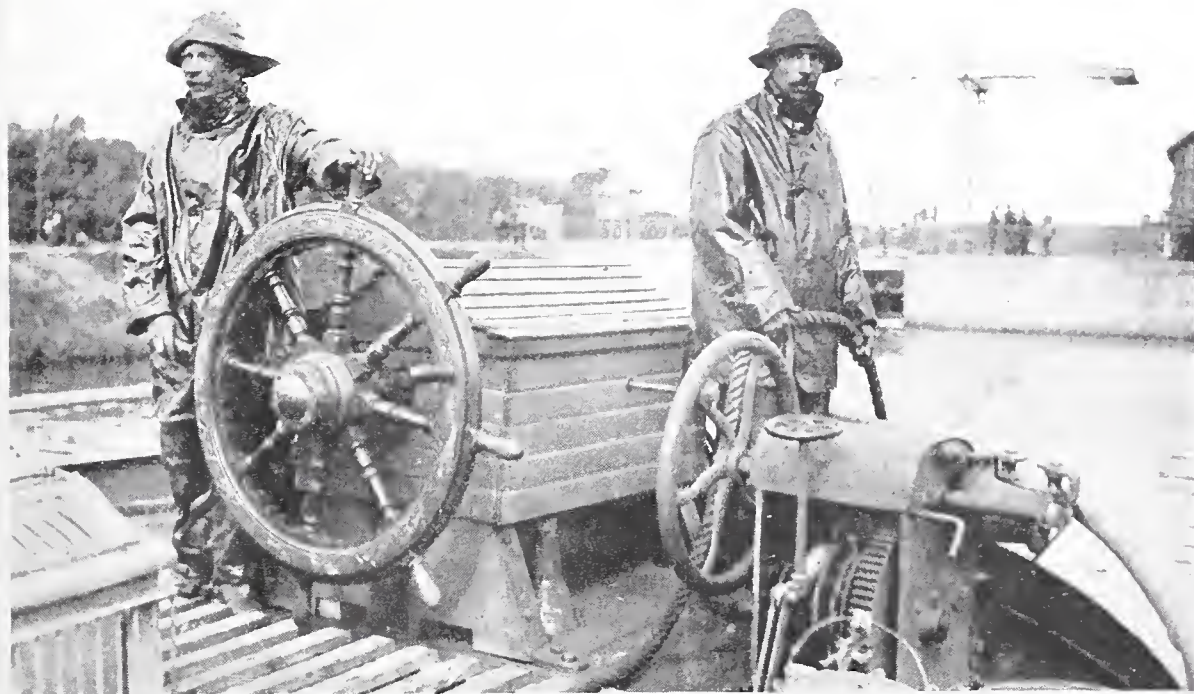
During the day the weather slightly improved and our airmen and observers in captive balloons were often able to notify to the British gunners the location of enemy troops preparing to counter-attack. But, about mid-day, the German aircraft made a resolute effort. In the ensuing combats the honours were fairly even. Ten of our machines were lost and 10 of the enemy's destroyed. Towards evening, when the climatic conditions were better, the German airmen kept well east of their lines and showed a disinclination to continue the struggle.

It will thus be seen that September 20, owing to the weather and the resolute attitude of Sixt von Armin's aviators, was not favourable for our artillerymen who had, without much assistance from our spotting aeroplanes, not only to smash the steel and concrete field



[Official photograph.]

OFF TO CLEAR UP THE FLOODED ROADS.



[Official photograph.]

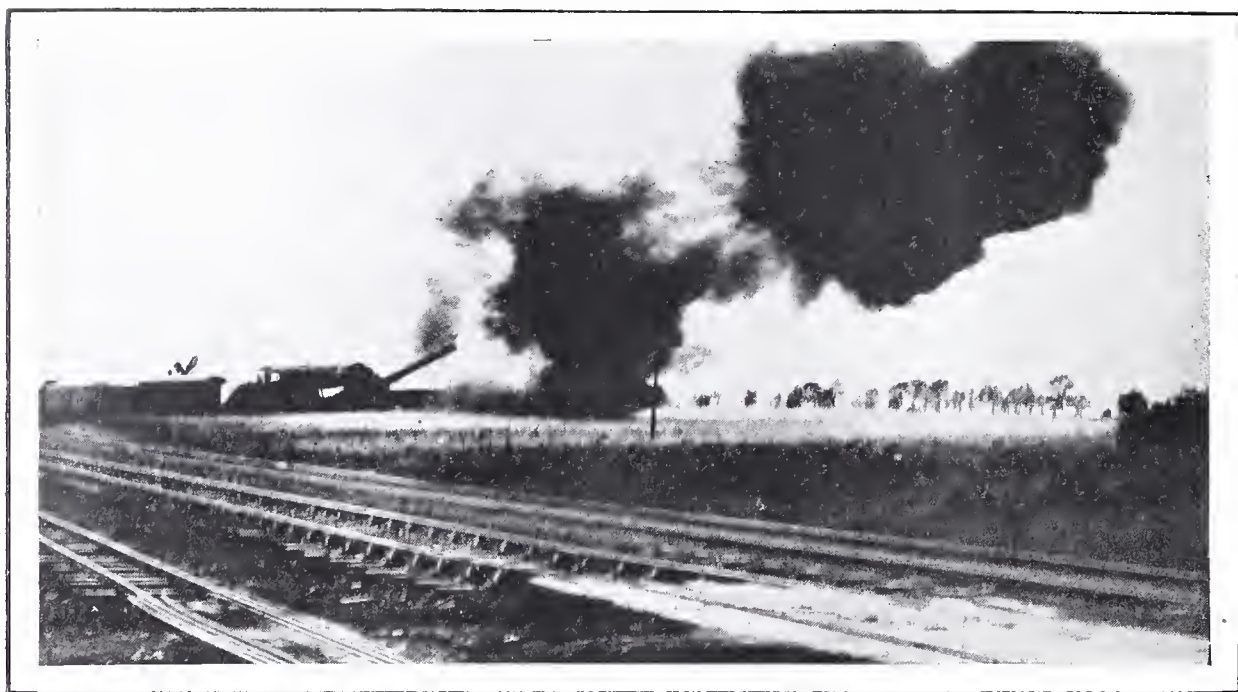
### BRITISH SOLDIERS AS BARGEES ON A CANAL IN FLANDERS.

Bringing up supplies for the Army.

forts in the path of the infantry but also to prevent the German reserves from coming to the assistance of the small garrisons and of the groups of machine-gunners, snipers and bombers ensconced in shell holes. For all this a clear atmosphere was needed. As by far the greater part of Sixt von Armin's forces were kept in the background for counter-attacks, our airmen directing the fire of the guns had to be well ahead of the British infantry, so as to detect at once all concentrations of enemy troops. Hindered by the clouds and mist, under fire from powerful anti-aircraft guns, and dived at by hostile machines, their task was peculiarly difficult. Yet on the results of their observation victory or defeat depended, since it was obvious that waves of infantry, disordered by their advance into the intricate network of "pill-boxes," would be at a great disadvantage if charged by masses of fresh troops following close behind the powerful barrages put down by the very formidable German batteries. It was essential, therefore, to keep the German reserves at a distance with artillery fire, until the ground gained had been consolidated. Otherwise, the situation of the British who had penetrated the fortified zone would be much worse than that of the Germans in the

front lines at the beginning of the battle, for, while the latter could count on some of their strong points remaining unreduced, the British would not possess any such supports and would have to fight practically in the open. That, under these untoward circumstances, the forenoon of the day went so favourably for Gough and Plumer, was a striking tribute to the excellence of our airmen and gunners, nearly all of whom had received their training since the outbreak of the war. Several redoubts were knocked out by direct hits during the preliminary bombardments and in the course of the battle. The garrisons of others, imprisoned by circular barrages, were obliged to surrender, and, except on Gough's left, counter-attacks failed to prevent the British entrenching themselves and repairing the captured field forts. The infantry were also directly aided by the airmen who, besides acting as eyes to the gunners, fired over 28,000 rounds at the German troops, batteries, machine guns and transport, dropped 68 bombs on Ledeghem railway station, 96 on two aerodromes north-east of Lille and 103 on billets, hutments, and ammunition dumps in the battle area. At night the station at Ledeghem was again bombed, as were those at Roulers and





[Official photograph.]

**THE BOMBARDMENT OF THE PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE**  
As the British saw it.

Menin. French aircraft also lent assistance during the offensive.

The month and more which had elapsed between August 16 and September 20 had been turned to good account, and never before, on the western front, had there been an attack so thoroughly arranged for. The British artillery preparation transcended the bombardments which had preceded the Battles of Craonne-Reims, Moronvilliers, Arras-Vimy and Messines and those of July 31 and August 16. Whenever the wind had been favourable the German positions had been gassed. Several concrete redoubts and most of the timber and wire entanglements had been destroyed; so many telephone wires had been cut that the Germans had had to resort to dog messengers. One of the latter, found in front of Zonnebeke, carried an order to the enemy's gunners to fire on certain British detachments.

At 10 p.m. on Wednesday, September 19, the final bombardment commenced. The black, wet night was lit up for miles with gun flashes which shed a pale and fitful light over the whole area and brought it into half illumination. For nearly six hours the hurricane swept over the German lines from the north of Langemark to the Ypres-Comines Canal, and an answering but lesser tornado of shells towards dawn descended on the British positions. At 5.40 a.m. on Thursday, September 20, our men—many of whom had had to lie out in the open soaked to the skin—went forward, splash-

ing their way through the muddy, swampy fields, and ragged woodland. The wind, blowing 30 miles an hour, was behind the British, but this was their only advantage. At one or two points only could tanks be employed. Considering what execution those land cruisers when used in numbers were to do in the region of Cambrai at the end of October, their comparative absence on this occasion was a most unfortunate circumstance. During the morning, however, the weather improved, and the red roofs of Passchendaele—at a distance still resembling a village—were distinctly visible, with the truncated church-tower and solitary factory chimney thrusting up above the trees and housetops. In the afternoon the atmosphere was so clear that our troops and batteries received warning of all the on-coming counter-attacks, with the result that the German losses were extremely heavy.

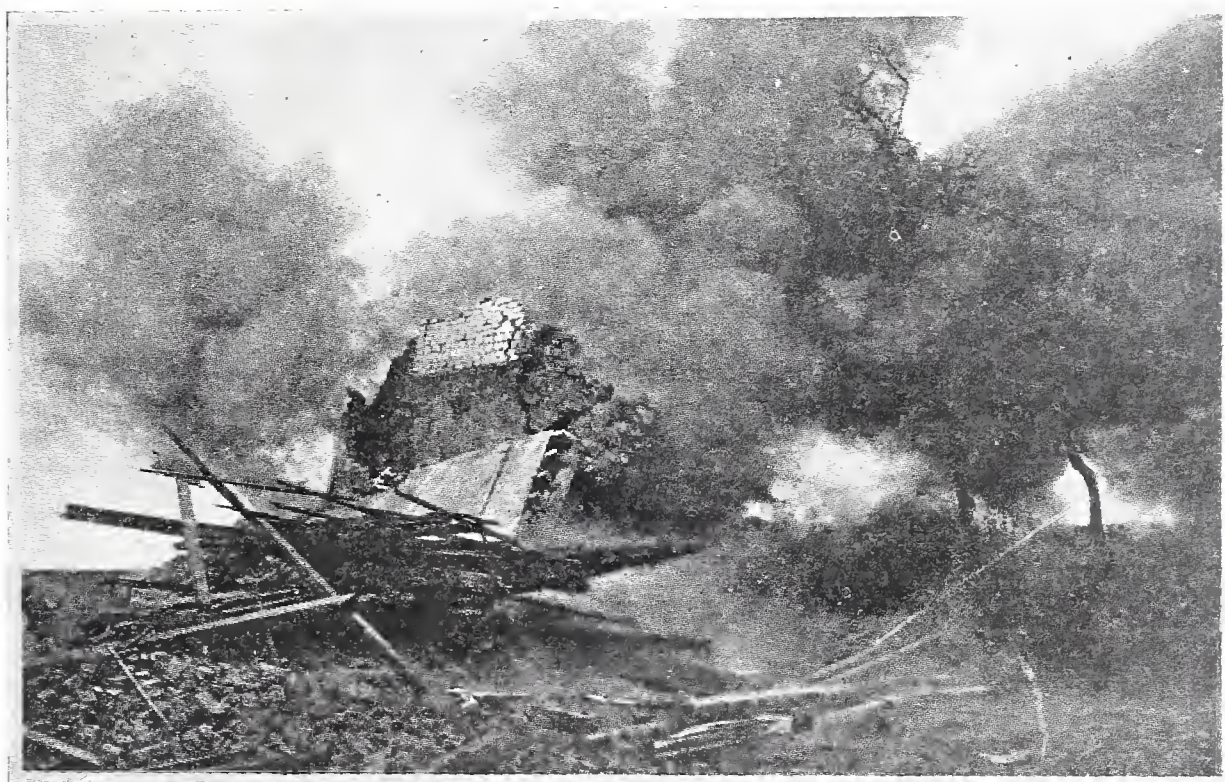
The Gravenstafel Spur, protruding from the Passchendaele Ridge north of Zonnebeke, was Gough's general objective. At its north-western edge it falls away into the valley of the Lekkerboterbeek, a rivulet which, half a mile or so south of Langemark, joins the Steenbeek. On the rising ground east of the latter village and north of the Lekkerboterbeek, were the ruins of Poelcappelle, connected by two roads with Langemark, on the northern of which was the hamlet of Schreyboom. The capture of Langemark had permitted Gough



to attack the Gravenstafel Spur from the north across the Lekkerboterbeek, but he required more space for manœuvring, and also possession of Poelcappelle. While the Germans retained this point and the eminences west of it, the turning of the spur from the north-west would be a hazardous undertaking, because British troops fording or bridging the Lekkerboterbeek would come under an enfilade fire. As Gough proposed to assault the spur south of the stream, it was necessary to extend his line north of it in the direction of Poelcappelle.

English infantry. At nightfall we had gained only a few trenches a mile north-east of Langemark near the Ypres-Staden Railway.

To Highland Territorials was assigned the dangerous task of advancing up both sides of the Lekkerboterbeek. As already narrated, the British had pushed their line south of Langemark across the road to Zonnebeke and had approached the Stroombeek, which, flowing down from the Passchendaele Ridge, enters the Lekkerboterbeek three quarters of a mile south-west of Poelcappelle, just east of



*From a snapshot taken by a German officer.*

#### THE BRITISH BOMBARDMENT OF THE PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE

As the Germans saw it.

Accordingly English Light Infantry regiments made a vigorous effort to advance along the southern side of the Ypres-Staden Railway and towards Poelcappelle by the Schreyboom road. Assisted by the fire of their comrades north of the railway on the southern bank of the Broenbeek, the Rifle Brigade and King's Royal Rifles and other troops fought desperately in Schreyboom, and the neighbourhood of Goedterveste Farm to its north. But, though they kept the Germans north of the Schreyboom road fully employed, and thus facilitated our attacks along both banks of the Lekkerboterbeek, they achieved little success. Sixt von Armin promptly counter-attacked, his reserves being motored up in omnibuses, while his guns, concealed in the Forest of Houthulst, kept up a rain of shells on the

the road from Ypres to that village. The Stroombeek divided the Gravenstafel from the Wallemolen Spur to its north. While the former heights ended well south of the Lekkerboterbeek, the Wallemolen Spur approached close to the rivulet. If the Highlanders passing between the Gravenstafel Spur and the Lekkerboterbeek could cross the Stroombeek and establish themselves on the western point of the Wallemolen Spur, the Gravenstafel Spur could be taken in reverse. Against this eventuality the German Engineers had provided. Where the Ypres-Poelcappelle road crossed the Lekkerboterbeek they had constructed the Pheasant Farm Redoubt, commanding the left bank of the Stroombeek. Farther east, across the stream in the angle formed by the confluence of it and the Lekkerboterbeek, was



the Delta Farm Redoubt guarding the right bank of the Stroombeek. Half a mile to its south on the Wallemolen Spur a farm, called by us Quebec Farm, had been converted into a fortress. North of the Lekkerboterbeek and the Pheasant Farm Redoubt, on the ridge between Langemark and Poeleappelle was another Redoubt, Rose Farm. The business of the Highlanders was to storm it and Pheasant Farm, and, crossing the Stroombeek, to drive the enemy from the Delta and Quebec Farm Redoubts.

At first the Territorials carried all before them, but, as they neared Rose Farm and Pheasant Farm they were held up by machine-gun fire. Trench mortars arrived and both strong points were reduced. Then there was a pause during which hostile aeroplanes, observing their position, caused the German artillery to turn the guns of one great battery group on to the exposed men. But, nevertheless, the Stroombeek was then crossed and Delta and Quebec Farms stormed. Encouraged, however, by their successful resistance in Sehreyboom, the Germans at 10 a.m. began violently to counter-attack. When the 36th Division (from Russia) and the 208th Division had exhausted their reserves, a fresh division, the 234th, arrived on the scene from Roulers.

It was perceived by our airmen who dived down and fired into the marching regiments, and notified their approach to the gunners. Heavy and field guns hurled projectiles at the slowly moving columns. Gas shells burst and the Germans hastily put on their masks. Losing heavily, the enemy infantry at last reached Poeleappelle and Wallemolen. Issuing thence in waves they attacked the Highlanders. The failure of the Light Infantry to carry Sehreyboom had exposed the Territorials' left, the western end of Grafenstafel Spur had not yet been cleared of the enemy. After beating off five counter-attacks, the Highlanders were at 7 p.m. dislodged from the Rose Farm and Delta Farm Redoubts. Rallied by their officers, they returned to the charge, and an hour later were again in both of them. The two strong points and the Pheasant Farm and Quebec Farm Redoubts were now firmly held, and Gravenstafel Spur had been turned from the north. At Rose Farm we had acquired a useful jumping-off point for an attack on either Sehreyboom or Poeleappelle.

The Gravenstafel Spur itself, rising between the Haanebeek to its south and the Stroombeek to its north, was, as has been mentioned in previous chapters, sown with "pill-boxes" of the strongest character. Along its south



WELSH TROOPS GOING UP TO ATTACK AT ZONNEBEKE (Official photograph.)





[Official photograph.]

THE ADVANCED LINE: ZONNEBEKE IN THE DISTANCE.

side went the stream of the Haanebeek which enters the Steenbeek at St. Julien and divides the Gravenstafel Spur from the heights—Hill 37 and Hill 35—west and north-west of Zonnebeke. The Langemarek-Zonnebeke road went over the north-western shoulder of the Gravenstafel Spur, descended into the valley of the Haanebeek, which it crossed, and, ascending the Zonnebeke Heights north-east of Hills 37 and 35 crossed the Ypres-Roulers railway in the outskirts of Zonnebeke. The Zonnebeke Heights, like the Gravenstafel Spur, were a maze of field forts, which, with the

hamlet of Zevenkote east of Hill 35, were strongly held by the enemy.

An advance from the region of St. Julien up the valley of the Haanebeek between them and the Gravenstafel Spur was blocked on the south side by a redoubt, Sehuler Farm, on the north side of the powerful Winnipeg Redoubt placed on the Langemarek-Zonnebeke road. Sehuler Farm was surrounded on three sides by water. Attached to it was the Sehuler Gallery, a long line of "pill-boxes" so arranged that an attack could be met from all directions. At the top of the spur looking down on the



valley of the Lekkerboterbeek was another fort, Vancouver Farm, with the Triangle Farm redoubt between it and St. Julien. Farther back towards Gravenstafel was the Von Tirpitz redoubt, and, north-east of the Winnipeg redoubt, was the powerfully organized Wurst Farm. North of Wurst Farm the ground dipped down to the valley of the Stroombeek.

The main objectives of the London Territorials on the right of the Highlanders were the above-mentioned field forts. Covered by the Highlanders moving up both sides of the Lekkerboterbeek, they were to endeavour to secure the northern end of the Gravenstafel Spur and to wedge themselves between that spur and the Zonnebeke heights by working up the valley of the Haanebeek, while attacks were at the same time to be made on the Zonnebeke Heights by other regiments.

Through the mist at 5.40 a.m. the Londoners, cheering lustily, followed our advancing barrage. As the Gravenstafel Spur ran diagonally across their front, they refused their centre and mounting the ridge at its north-western end, tried to drive the enemy along it towards Gravenstafel. Troops of the Prussian Second

Guard Reserve Division, supported later by troops of the 451st, 452nd and 453rd regiments of the 234th Division, had been detailed by Sixt von Armin to hold this, one of the key positions in his line.

Triangle Farm was the first obstacle encountered by our men. After a fierce struggle the garrison was killed, wounded or captured, and then Vancouver Farm was assaulted. The redoubt and its neighbouring "pill-boxes" were reduced, and the Londoners, now on the summit of the spur, made for the Von Tirpitz and Wurst Farms. The Prussian Guards fought desperately but the redoubts were surrounded and stormed. Having reached their objectives on the spur, the Londoners halted and entrenched themselves. Groups of them with machine-guns occupied craters on its northern edge and swept with their fire the valley of the Stroombeek, thus protecting the right of the Highlanders who were across the river in Quebec and Delta Farms. The centre of the Londoners now went forward and joined their comrades on the summit of the ridge.

There was but a short interval before the counter-attacks began. The Germans from the



*(Australian official photograph.)*

A RATIONS DUMP BEING DISTRIBUTED BY CARRIERS DURING THE BATTLE OF ZONNEBEKE.





[Official photograph.]

**SOME OF THE PRISONERS CAPTURED NEAR THE WIELTJE-GRAVENSTAFEL ROAD  
BY NORTH MIDLAND TROOPS AND LONDON TERRITORIALS.**

Wallemolen Spur crossed the Stroombeek and mounted the heights. Others from the direction of Gravenstafel charged along the summit of the spur. It was a ticklish situation for our men. On the right their comrades, operating in the marshy valley of the Haanebeek, failing to carry Schuler Farm and the Schuler Gallery, had been forced to form a defensive flank. Two tanks had crept up to the farm, but so strong were the concrete works that they had been beaten off. The Prussian 121st Division in this sector had fully expected the attack. At 1 a.m. an Order had been issued warning the garrisons of the advanced forts that they were about to be assaulted. Consequently the Londoners were met by foes on the alert.\* Towards evening the Prussian Guards made a last effort to recover Wurst Farm. They were mown down by machine-gun fire and, when the sun set, the Londoners were still in possession of it and the western end of the spur.

While the English light infantry were being repulsed north-east of Langemarek, and the Highlanders were establishing themselves on the western end of the Wallemolen, and the Londoners on the western end of the Graven-

stafel Spur, the Zonnebeke Heights to the south had been assaulted. These heights were divided into two sectors by the little Zonnebeek stream. In the northern rose Hill 37, with the Gallipoli Redoubt on the ridge to its west and the Iberian and Delva fortified farms below it near the banks of the rivulet. West Lancashire Territorial battalions in the wet and heavy ground south-east of St. Julien attacked the northern sector. Every square yard in it was fiercely contested, but during the afternoon Gallipoli, Hill 37 and the Iberian and Delva Farms were taken.

The dominating feature in the southern sector of the Zonnebeke Heights was Hill 35, between which and Zonnebeke was the fortified hamlet of Zevenkote. On the ridge in front of Hill 35 was the formidable Bremen Redoubt, commanding the valley of the upper Steenbeek. At this point we had not yet reached the western bank of the flooded stream, and the Germans still held the Borry Farm and Vampire Works, redoubts well to the west of the Steenbeek, whose crossing just north of the Ypres-Zonnebeke-Roulers railway was, moreover, barred by another fortress, the Potsdam Works. Keeping line as far as possible with the West Lancashire Territorials, troops from South Africa attacked this position, against which Gough had already thrown in vain some of his battalions.

\* Except here and on the Australian front, where the Germans had also been warned of an impending attack, the advance of the British seems to have been in the nature of a surprise.





HIGHLANDERS ATTACKING AT ZONNEBEKE WOOD.



The South Africans in their advance were heavily fired on by the enemy from Hill 37, which was not taken by the West Lancashire Territorials till the afternoon. But early in the day, charging through our barrage, the South Africans cleared the Germans out of the Borry Farm and Vampire Works and reached the Upper Steenbeek. On the right the Potsdam Works delayed the advance until taken by the South Africans and Scottish troops pushing forward on both sides of the Ypres-Roulers railway. A "pill-box" to the north-west resisted for some time, but a Johannesburg man climbed on to the roof and dropped an incendiary bomb down a ventilator. The interior became a furnace and the garrison bolted. They were shot at as they fled.

Crossing the Steenbeek the South Africans mounted the slopes and carried the Bremen Redoubt. There they halted for a time. When the West Lancashires appeared on Hill 37, the advance was resumed. The summit of Hill 35 was seized, and the hamlet of Zevenkote entered. Some 30 machine-guns and 300 prisoners had been secured. Twice the Germans counter-attacked. The first rush was stopped by a barrage of shells, the second by rifle and machine-gun fire. On the 20th the South Africans had shown what could be done with the rifle in the hands of marksmen. Here and there there had been bayonet fighting. A sergeant, for instance, after killing two Germans bayoneted, was in turn bayoneted by a third coming to his comrades' assistance.

Aligned with the South Africans were Scottish troops, among them the Royal Scots, forming the extreme right of Gough's Fifth Army. They had been deputed to reduce the Potsdam Works and the eastern slopes of Hill 35, and on the other side of the Ypres-Roulers railway to dislodge the enemy from the Zonnebeke Redoubt, a strong point, some thousand yards or so below the cellars of the village of that name and between the railroad and the Anzac Redoubt. The Potsdam Works, Zonnebeke and Anzac Redoubts were the chief stronghold in the German line stretching from Hill 35 over the railroad to Polygon Wood, and they were all of a formidable character. In the boggy land, under fire from the machine-guns in the redoubts and numerous dug-outs below the railway embankment, the Scotsmen struggled forward. Detachments of South Africans assaulted the Potsdam Works from the west and north. Gradually that nucleus

of resistance was isolated and the garrison put out of action, and by nightfall our front on the west side of the railway had been brought up to the level of Zevenkote.

Beyond the railway embankment the struggle was equally severe. The Scottish troops, before the attack, had crept up to within 40 yards of the enemy's entrenchments. To reach the Zonnebeke Redoubt they had to thread their way between craters filled to the brim with muddy, stinking water, between stumps of trees and tattered undergrowth. If this redoubt had been the only obstacle, it would have been enough to tax their courage, but, as it happened, the Zonnebeke Redoubt was only the largest of a group of similar structures, all of which had to be reduced. Not till 10 a.m. was the bloody and dangerous work accomplished. The garrison of the Zonnebeke Redoubt, who had been helped by machine-gun fire from the still unreduced Anzac Redoubt—300 yards to its south on slightly higher ground—had made an intrepid defence. Two field guns, several trench mortars, and a large number of machine-guns were captured by the Scottish troops.

Thus on September 20 Gough, despite his reverse north of Langemark, had won a substantial success. His left north of the Lekkerboterbeek was at Rose Farm, within a few hundred yards of Poelcappelle, his right south of the Ypres-Roulers railroad almost in Zonnebeke, and the heights west of Zonnebeke had at last been captured. Between those heights and the Gravenstafel Spur the enemy, except at Schuler Farm and a few other strong points, had been driven up the valley of the Haanebeek. The western end of Gravenstafel Spur with Wurst Farm had been gained. The Stroombeek had been crossed by the Highlanders and the tip of the Wallemolen Spur had been gained. Pivoting on the Zonnebeke Redoubt, Gough could now swing the bulk of his forces towards the Passchendaele Ridge.

Before that swing could be commenced it was necessary that Plumer should reach the ridge north and south of the Ypres-Menin road. If Plumer had been defeated on September 20, Gough's victory would have been of little worth. With anxious eyes, therefore, Sir Herbert Plumer must have watched the progress of his men. The first and second phases of the third battle of Ypres had demonstrated the extraordinary strength of the position



which he was attacking. Between the open, rolling ground south of Zonnebeke and the Zwartelen-Zandvoorde road a "pill-boxed" wilderness of tree stumps, littered branches, barbed wire entanglements, craters and ponds, which was traversed by the Ypres-Menin road, barred his advance on the ridge.

From north to south this barrier measured over three miles in length; its breadth from west to east was in places over a mile. At the north-western edge of this district was the flooded Nonne-Boschen Wood, separated by an open space from the much larger Polygon Wood to its east. Up to the present the German garrisons in these two woods had defied all efforts to eject them. The Nonne-Boschen merged to its south in Glencorse Wood, the western fringe of which we had secured in August. A gap of some 400 yards divided Glencorse Wood from Inverness Copse. In the centre of the gap a strong redoubt, Fitzclarence Farm, linked by pill-boxes to both patches of shattered woodland, stood in the way of the British. The Ypres-Menin road, with a gallery of subterranean forts, cut through Inverness Copse. In the southern half of Inverness Copse, surrounded by lagoons, were the fortified ruins of Herenthage Château. From

the southern of the Dumbarton Lakes flowed the flooded Bassevillebeek, running below and parallel with Plumer's front. Its banks had been shot away. Inverness Copse tailed into the eastern fringe of Shrewsbury Forest, which extended westward to the north of Klein Zillebeke. We had already obtained a lodgment in its western face. Below Shrewsbury Forest there was comparatively open country as far as the Ypres-Comines Canal. The road from Zwartelen to Zandvoorde descended the Klein Zillebeke Spur half a mile south of Shrewsbury Forest, crossed the Bassevillebeek and ascended the Zandvoorde Ridge.

The ridges east of the Bassevillebeek were considerably lower than those to the west now in possession of the British, but our advantage in this respect was counterbalanced by the extraordinary strength of the German defences on both sides of the stream, and by the difficult character of the barrier west of it. There our men would have to wade through mud and water, tread on the rotting remains of dead friends and enemies, and avoid as best they could the trip mines, tangles of barbed wire and shell craters full to the brim with water and filth. From innumerable "pill-boxes" they would be met by machine-gun bullets,



[Official photograph.]

STUCK IN THE MUD.





#### HIGHLANDERS BEAT OFF A COUNTER-ATTACK WITH SPADES.

An incident of the fighting near Zonnebeke.

while the German batteries on or beyond the Zandvoorde Ridge would deluge them with high-explosive and shrapnel shells as they were pressing their way down into the valley of the Bassevillebeek.

Nevertheless, the task before Plumer was considerably easier than Gough's on August 16. Fighting on a wider front, with his right resting on the Ypres-Comines Canal, Sir Herbert had

not to fear that during the course of the battle he would be counter-attacked from the south as well as from the east, and the preliminary bombardment had disposed of many of the strong points besides ripping paths through the barbed wire entanglements.

Sir Herbert's plan was to turn this wilderness from the south by an advance down the Klein Zillebeke Spur into the valley of the



Bassevillebeek, and from the north by a movement across the Upper Steenbeek to the south of Zonnebeke. Simultaneously the Germans were to be expelled from Shrewsbury Forest, the Dumbarton Lakes region, Inverness Copse and Veldhoek at its eastern end on the Ypres-Menin road, from Fitzelarenee Farm, Gleneorse and Nonne-Boschen Woods, and the western half of Polygon Wood.

On Plumer's left in touch with the Scottish troops on Gough's right wing were the Australians. At 5.40 a.m. the latter moved towards the Anzac Redoubt, which, as has been mentioned, was 300 yards south of the Zonnebeke Redoubt, and also towards Nonne-Boschen and Polygon Woods. By storming the Anzac Redoubt and the other strong points thence to Polygon Wood, they would be able to assault the latter area from the north. To attack Polygon Wood and Nonne-Boschen Wood from the west one of the preliminary steps to be taken was to expel the Germans from the whole of the Gleneorse Wood.

It was some minutes before 10 a.m. when the Scotsmen reduced Zonnebeke Redoubt. The Australians also advancing from the Upper Steenbeek, arrived in the neighbourhood of the Anzac Redoubt about the same time

or a little later. They had been delayed on the banks of the stream by fire from intact "pill-boxes." The Anzac fort was a two-roomed concrete and steel redoubt of extraordinary solidity. Its observation tower stood 15 feet above the ground, and it was garrisoned by 30 Germans, provided with two machine-guns. Anticipating its capture, three Australians who had fought in the Gallipoli Peninsula carried Australian flags to hoist above it. At the outset it looked as if their anticipation would not be fulfilled. So long as the Zonnebeke Redoubt kept the Scotsmen at bay, the reduction of this field fort was problematical. Direct assaults were repulsed, but when Zonnebeke Redoubt fell the Anzac Redoubt was outflanked and the enemy machine-gun fire silenced with grenades, which smashed in the door. A few minutes afterwards the Australian flag appeared on the summit of the tower and was greeted with wild cheering.

The wilderness had been turned at one end and Polygon Wood could be assaulted from the north. The victors promptly wheeled to the right and joined their comrades who from the Westhoek Ridge were emerging through the water-logged Nonne-Boschen morass and approaching the western fringe of Polygon Wood.



[Official photograph.]

GERMAN TRENCHES IN A WOOD WRECKED BY ARTILLERY.



The Australian centre and right had been sorely tried. Just before the troops went over the top they had been violently bombarded. A strong redoubt between Nonne-Boschen and Glencorse Woods took obliquely the waves entering both areas. It was surrounded and the door blown in with grenades. In the Nonne-Boschen Wood, where the ground was very swampy and "pill-boxes" abounded, there was stiff fighting; but the Australians with bombs and bayonets gradually forced their way through it.

The Germans in Glencorse Wood offered less resistance. Issuing about 8 a.m. from the captured woods, the Australian centre prepared, in conjunction with the left, to storm Polygon Wood. Its western fringe defended at the southern end by the Black Watch Corner and Carlisle Farm Redoubts looked peculiarly uninviting. The Australians scanning the open country before it waited a couple of hours, smoking and reading. At last the news that the Zonnebeke and Anzac Redoubts were being reduced reached them and they at once rushed forward. Aided by the men round Anzac Redoubt, their waves broke through the German crater line and struggled to the racecourse in the centre of the tree stumps. By 11 a.m. the western half of Polygon Wood was ours. An hour later Black Watch Corner and Carlisle Farm Redoubts had been stormed.

Sixth von Armin vainly counter-attacked to recover the lost position. The first counter-attack was from the eastern half of the wood. It was dispersed by artillery fire. At 2 p.m. masses of Germans debouched from Zonnebeke and made for the northern edge. They were caught by our barrage and driven back in confusion.

Astride the Menin road the fighting was at its fiercest. North-Country troops had been ordered by Plumer to help the Australians to dislodge the enemy from Fitzclarence Farm and the open space between Glencorse Wood and Inverness Copse, and, on their own account, to clear out the Germans from Inverness Copse. A chain of field forts called "the Towers" connected Fitzclarence Farm with the road, while south of the road, were the ruins of Herenthage Château. Beyond "the Towers" was a furrowed open field, and east of it the Northampton Farm Redoubt linked to the fortified ruins of Veldhoek, a little to the north of the high road. These, too, had to be taken, together with the tunnels

beneath the causeway and the concreted cellars of the hamlet, Kantinje Cabaret, which extended down the road towards the historic Gheluvelt.

At 5.30 a.m. the North-countrymen set out



[Official portrait by Francis Dodd.]

**GENERAL SIR HERBERT C. O. PLUMER,**  
G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

Commanded the Second Army in the Third Battle of Ypres.

on their perilous enterprise. Fitzclarence Farm was carried by bombers, and our men waded through the water-logged ground of Inverness Copse, capturing the concreted derelict Tank, referred to at the beginning of this chapter, and 30 prisoners. Lying among the fallen trees, creeping from shell hole to shell hole, some of them sniped the garrisons of "the Towers," while others boldly advanced and with bombs blew in doorways and blocked up the artfully contrived bolt-holes. The men of the 4th Bavarian Division opposing them fought stoutly but one by one the strong points were reduced.

The open field had now to be crossed in face of rifle and machine-gun fire from Northampton Farm and Veldhoek. The Bavarians rallied and counter-attacked south of the road. They were beaten back and the advance north of the road was resumed. Northampton Farm fell and our troops broke into the ruins of Veldhoek. Their success caused the Bavarians defending the tunnels beneath the Ypres-Menin Road and the cellars of the Kantinje Cabaret hamlet





[Official, h. ogra, h.]

#### GOING TO THE FRONT ON THE MENIN ROAD NEAR POLDERHOEK.

to fall back on the trenches between Polygon Wood and the west of Gheluvelt. Two hundred surrendered, while the others, as they fled over the fields towards Polderhoek and along the road, were shot down by our infantry and machine-guns in large numbers.

South of the Menin road there had been, also, a bitter and prolonged struggle. The ruins of Herenthage Château were surrounded by sheets of stagnant water, those to the south, Dumbarton Lakes, being quite a quarter of a mile wide. To reach the ruins the North-Countrymen had to move along the narrow intermediate pathway or to work round the lagoons. First a crater-pitted area of battered woodland had to be negotiated. This was accomplished and our men, crawling or stooping, slowly circumvented Herenthage Château, while a few daring spirits filed over the narrow lane between the lagoons. The garrison of the château were killed, wounded or taken prisoners. Then the British waded the swollen Bassevillebeek, climbed up its broken banks and established themselves within a quarter of a mile of Gheluvelt. They had materially assisted regiments from the South-east Counties of England crossing the Bassevillebeek lower down to reach the important Tower Hamlets Spur on its east bank.

Later in the day troops of the 4th Bavarian Division attempted to counter-attack from Polderhoek, and the 16th Bavarian Division advanced up the Menin road. Our artillery and machine-gun fire drove back the former, while our airmen bombed and our gunners shelled the road; in neither case did the enemy come within bayonet range.

South of Herenthage Château and Dumbarton Lakes the ground was marshy but open as far as Shrewsbury Forest, which was connected at its eastern end with Inverness Copse by a fringe of woodland, Clommel Copse and Bodmin Copse. Beyond Clommel Copse, hard by the Bassevillebeek, was the fortified Pappotje Farm. Southern County troops, including the East Surreys and Kents, at 5.40 a.m., dashed down the slopes towards the Bassevillebeek, threaded Clommel and Bodmin Copse, stormed Pappotje Farm and forded the stream under fire from a large quadrilateral redoubt, known as Tower Hamlets, on the spur beyond it. This was attached to the German front by trenches at each end. Before and behind it were "pill-boxes" commanding the crossings of the Bassevillebeek and the slopes to the valley of the Upper Gladjebeek lying between Zandvoorde and Kruiseik. This fort, which protected Gheluvelt from a southern attack,



had resisted our shells, and for hours the South Countrymen were unable to wade through the Bassevillebeek and attack it. When, however, the North Countrymen who had captured Herenthage Château appeared at the base of the spur, the advance was resumed, the stream traversed, and a lodgment effected on the summit of the spur. But the Tower Hamlets redoubt could not be taken, and continued, like Schuler Farm, to protrude into the new British line.

tenacity by the German 19th, 6th and 395th Regiments.\*

One of our companies on the left lost all its officers and was reduced to 22 men under a corporal. Backwards and forwards swayed the combat in the portion of the woodland on the summit of the ridge above Klein Zillebeke. At last the enemy was thrust down the slopes and driven from Shrewsbury Forest into Bulgar Wood on the slopes of the west bank of the Bassevillebeek. Dozens of "pill-



[Austrian official photograph.]

#### AN OBSERVATION POST NEAR WESTHOEK.

Telephone Wires being laid through a trench and tunnel.

The Tower Hamlets quadrilateral redoubt and its supporting pill-boxes were, meanwhile, being approached from the south by other English battalions advancing on the Bassevillebeek through the mile-wide tangle of Shrewsbury Forest. Here the enemy was experimenting with a new kind of "flaming bullets" which set fire to our soldiers' clothing. Fortunately it was easy to extinguish the flames by rolling the men in the mud. Shrewsbury Forest, being a fine base for counter-attacks against our troops on the all-important 60-metre ridge to its north and west, was defended with remarkable

boxes" had been captured together with a strong point at the north-eastern corner. Finally Bulgar Wood, in which there were eight "pill-boxes," swarming with snipers and machine gunners, was carried and our men reached the Bassevillebeek. At 7 p.m. Sixt von Armin massed several battalions and companies with flammenwerfer on the Zand-

\* The Zandvoorde Ridge beyond the Bassevillebeek being only 44 metres high, we had already gained the dominating ground south of the Ypres-Menin road. Sixt von Armin was naturally averse from giving up his last chance of recovering it, which accounts for the long and desperate resistance opposed to us in Shrewsbury Forest and Inverness Copse.



voorde Ridge for a counter-attack. Their appearance was at once notified to our gunners, and from the north of Ypres to Hollebeke the British batteries pumped shells at the assembling Germans, the survivors of whom, instead of charging across the Bassevillebeek, fled headlong into the valley of the Gladjebeek.

In the sparsely wooded region west of the Bassevillebeek between Shrewsbury Forest and the Ypres-Comines Canal Plumer's turning of the wilderness from the south was on the 20th only partially successful. Welsh and West County troops descended the Klein Zillebeke Spur and reached most of their objectives. The fortified Groenenburg Farm just south of Shrewsbury Forest and Opaque Wood on the edge of the canal were reduced, but some concrete redoubts in Hessian Wood and Belgian Wood (north of Hollebeke Cemetery) were still holding out at nightfall. Close to Hollebeke Château there were fierce encounters round Prince's House, Jorrock's Farm and Pioneer House. As the Welsh and West countrymen in their advance were exposed the whole way to the German guns on and behind the Zandvoorde Ridge, their performance in

preventing the enemy from counter-attacking from the south their comrades in Shrewsbury Forest was highly meritorious.

Plumer had succeeded where Gough on August 16 had failed. Our casualties were light; those of the enemy heavy. In addition to his dead and wounded, Sixt von Armin had lost to Plumer and Gough 3,243 prisoners and a number of guns and machine-guns.

It will have been noted that at two points Gough and at one point Plumer had not succeeded in reaching their objectives. North-east of Langemarck a stubborn struggle went on for the short length of trench which the English light infantry had failed to take. It was only at dawn on September 23, after German storm-troops had been driven back in confusion, that it passed into British hands. East of St Julien our men stormed Schuler Farm on Friday, September 21. Towards nightfall Sixt von Armin launched a powerful counter-attack on a wide front, with a view to recovering the redoubt, the western end of the Grafenstafel Spur, and Hill 37. His troops came on in masses, and at one spot pene-



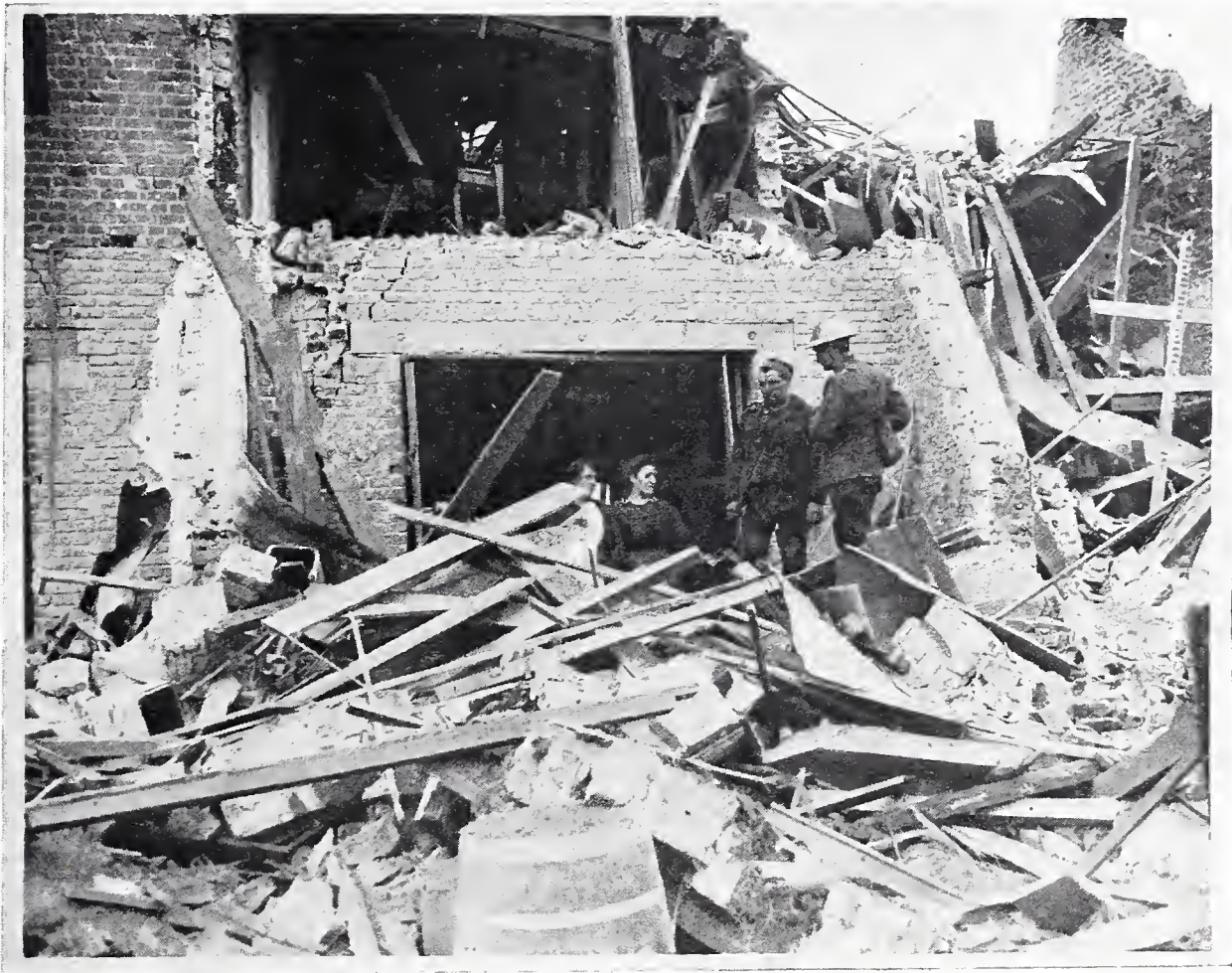
[Canadian War Records.]

FRENCH WOMEN SELLING ORANGES TO CANADIANS RETURNING FROM THE TRENCHES.



trated the British line. But the Londoners and West Lancashires, inflicting terrible losses on the enemy, were not to be denied. At the end of two hours of fierce fighting Schuler Farm and the ground north and south of it were still ours. In the morning of the same day Plumer had ejected the Germans from

the cloudless autumnal sky, columns of British troops from all parts of the Empire were marching westwards to their rest camps; at intervals the grimed and tattered men from the trenches halted to make way for the men taking their places. The guns and ammunition were being brought farther forward; roads and railroads



[Canadian War Records.]

#### A FRENCH VILLAGER RETURNS TO HIS HOME.

the quadrilateral redoubt on the Tower Hamlets Ridge south of the Ypres-Menin road. In the afternoon Sixt von Armin ineffectually counter-attacked on both sides of the wrecked thoroughfare, and again early in the night of the 21st-22nd. Both assaults were bloodily repulsed. During Saturday, September 22, Sixt von Armin's attempts were renewed. Thrice the Germans north of Tower Hamlets Spur rushed forward. They were met by Durham troops and on all three occasions driven back, but the enemy succeeded in gaining a lodgment farther south, on the Spur itself. After sunset a German raid into Plumer's trenches south of Warneton, near La Basse Ville, yielded no result. The enemy retired without securing any prisoners.

The weather had now become good. Under

were being constructed in the region conquered on the 20th. If Sixt von Armin intended to regain the important position astride the Ypres-Menin road, it was necessary for him to resume the offensive without a moment's delay. On Monday, September 24, in the afternoon, his guns barraged Black Watch Corner, Cameron House, Tower Hamlets Ridge, Glencorse Wood and Inverness Copse, and the area behind those points, and, encouraged by his slight success on the 22nd, on the 25th he tried to isolate our troops on Tower Hamlets Ridge by breaking our line to its north. At 6 a.m. on Tuesday, September 25, under cover of a dense white haze almost as thick as a fog, waves of Germans, preceded by a terrific bombardment, advanced against the British positions between the ridge and Polygon





[Official photograph.]

A BUSY SCENE BEHIND THE LINES: ARTILLERY TRANSPORT.

Wood. The condition of the "wood" at this date has been graphically described by Mr. C. E. W. Bean, the official correspondent with the Australians in France :—

Apart from the indiscriminate shelling, tearing scattered dust-clouds from the broken grey scrub, the long brown Polygon Ridge was to-day a silent, motionless, dust-ridden desert. The nearest thing one can compare it to is a patch of bush through which a terrific fire had swept and which has since been battered into a dreary dun-powdered waste by the feet of millions of travelling sheep. Make each footprint as great as a steamship funnel and you have Polygon Wood.

A green mound which used to look down on the far end of the old race-track stands to-day flayed and dented, with a few leaning ragged tree poles still on the summit. Behind it for a thousand yards German stretcher-bearers for three days have been collecting wounded and were still picking up one or two wounded this morning.

Immediately south of this dust-ridden, shell-ploughed desert, the enemy at Cameron House and elsewhere gained a footing for short distances, on narrow fronts, as he also did just north of the Ypres-Menin road. Through-



out the morning fighting of the bitterest description went on, and at mid-day Sixt von Armin made a more definite and strenuous attempt. At first he had some success, and for some hours it seemed doubtful whether we might not have to fall back into Inverness Copse and Glencorse Wood.

Plumer, however, had not been caught napping. The English, Scottish and Welsh battalions and the Australians rallied, and reserves were brought up. In the early afternoon the British counter-attacks began, and the enemy, fighting stubbornly, were flung out of the trenches, strong-points and dug-outs which they had succeeded in capturing earlier in the day. By night-fall our line had been re-established at most places between Polygon Wood and the Ypres-Menin road, but two companies of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were temporarily surrounded by the Germans. Showing great courage and resolution, they held out till the next day, when they were relieved by their comrades during the second of the three "pushes" which constituted the third phase of the battle. Sixt von Armin prepared to renew the struggle twenty-four hours later, and fresh troops were brought up for the purpose. But before they arrived, we had again struck.

On September 26, Gough and Plumer proposed once more to enter Sixt von Armin's fortified zone. Pivoting on Hill 35 and Zevenkote, the former was to storm Zonnebeke and to swing his right and centre eastwards towards the Passchendaele Ridge, while Plumer's Australians, clearing the enemy out of the remainder of Polygon Wood, were to establish themselves on the ridge itself beyond the road joining Zonnebeke and Becelaere. To the south of Polygon Wood, astride the Ypres-Menin road, the English, Scottish and Welsh troops engaged the day before were also to attack. North of the road the objective was the portion of the ridge between Noordendhoek, a hamlet south-east of Zonnebeke and north of Becelaere, traversed by the high road from Becelaere through Broodseinde and Passchendaele. The village of Becelaere is about two miles north-east of Gheluvelt and is connected with Gheluvelt by a road. On this road, half-way between Becelaere and Gheluvelt, is the hamlet of Poezelhoek. At Poezelhoek the road is merged in that from Becelaere to Kruiseik and Wervicq. The stream of the Reutelbeek,

which rises a quarter of a mile south of the south-western corner of Polygon Wood, goes under the road between Becelaere and Poezelhoek. Before doing so it traverses the considerable Polderhoek Wood, with the hamlet and château of that name at its south end, half a mile north of Gheluvelt. Just east of the wood the Polygonebeek, whose sources are close to the race-course, joins the Reutelbeek. Between the Polygonebeek and Becelaere on the edge of the Passchendaele ridge is the village of Reutel. Thence to Becelaere, three-quarters of a mile distant, was open land.

South of the Ypres-Menin road Plumer's aim



[Official photograph.]

#### A GERMAN SNIPER'S POST.

was completely to reduce the Tower Hamlets ridge. Though we had captured the quadrilateral redoubt commanding the valley of the Bassevillebeek, the Germans still possessed strong fortified works on the eastern slopes of the ridge, which prevented us from turning Gheluvelt on the south and Zandvoorde on the north.

The front attacked measured, as has been said, under six miles, but, if the German *communiqué* (quoted below) which asserted that we delivered battle between the Broenbeek and the Ypres-Comines Canal is to be credited, demonstrations of the kind already employed at Lens and elsewhere were simultaneously made north of St. Julien and south of the Tower Hamlets ridge. These feigned attacks, if they in fact took place, must have been designed to draw Sixt von Armin's reserves away from the real objectives of Gough and Plumer.

The night before was warm; the moon rose in a clear sky. The air was still and there was a



heavy ground mist. Our aeroplanes went up and flew over the German lines. During the previous day an aerodrome and railway sidings near Ghent, hutments south-west of Roulers, and an aerodrome near Courtrai, had been bombed. Now five tons of bombs were dropped and thousands of rounds fired from machine-guns through the luminous mist on Menin and Wervicq, and on enemy troops and transport leading thence to the battle front. West of Menin the Royal Naval Air Service was bombing Thourout, Lichtervelde and Cortemarck railway stations, and, according to a German *communiqué*, Ostend was shelled from the sea.

A long preliminary bombardment of the enemy's positions was not contemplated, but when it came towards dawn on Wednesday, September 26, it was very severe in character. At 5.50 a.m. the infantry left their underground or open shelters and ran forward. One of the most bitterly contested actions in the Ypres salient had opened.

On the extreme left an advance of only 1,000 yards or so along the Gravenstafel Spur had been ordered by Gough. With the Germans still holding almost the whole of the

Wallemolen Spur to its north and the valley of the Upper Haanebeek to its south, it would have been courting defeat to have pushed in the direction of Gravenstafel beyond Aviatik Farm redoubt and the hamlet of Boetleer. The redoubt and the fortified ruins of the hamlet had been badly hammered by our guns, and the Saxons of the 23rd Reserve Division defending them offered but a feeble resistance to the London Territorials and North Midlanders entrusted with the reduction of the strong points above mentioned. Some of the enemy were discovered in open order, apparently about to assault Wurst Farm. They were sent flying eastwards across the fields. Nearly 200 prisoners were captured, including a sailor who had been on the *Dresden* and had been picked up by a Swedish ship after the battle of the Falkland Islands. Later the Germans concentrated all their artillery in that region on the Londoners, and drove them back. But our men returned to the charge and recovered the positions they had evacuated. In honour of their achievements the western end of the Gravenstafel Spur was thenceforth called "London Ridge."



*Official photograph.*

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE WITHIN 500 YARDS OF THE GERMANS.

For transmitting orders from observation officers to batteries.

South of "London Ridge," from between Schuler Farm and Hill 37, the North Midlanders and other English troops pushed forward west and east of the Ypres-Passchendaele road. The ground had dried since September 20, but, as before, it was a waste of shell holes, among which rose up the towers of numerous field forts. From Abraham Heights, just west of Gravenstafel, and from other points on the southern face of the spur hundreds of machine-guns played on our men ascending or descending into the valley of the Haanebeek. The right flank of the British was enfiladed by the Germans in Zonnebeke, and when Zonnebeke fell, by the garrisons of the dug-outs in the Ypres-Roulers railway. Beyond Dochy Farm there was very stiff fighting, and the English were twice heavily counter-attacked. Here our line was advanced about half a mile.

Meanwhile Gough had directed English, Scottish and Welsh battalions on the front between Zevenkote and Polygon Wood to storm Zonnebeke, the ruins of the Château in its southern outskirts, the railway station redoubt to its north, and beyond it, nearer Grafenstafel, the Windmill Cabaret fortress on Hill 40. Below the latter in a putrid swamp was a blockhouse, Bostin Farm. Every crater was defended by machine gunners and snipers, and the railway had been converted into a string of dug-outs stretching from the west of the village up and over the Passchendaele Ridge, which was traversed by the line just north of Nieuwemolen, a village north-east of Zonnebeke between Broodseinde and Passchendaele. The ruins of Broodseinde and Nieuwemolen, with those of Zonnebeke below them on the slopes to the west, were so connected with dug-outs and pill-boxes that they formed at the centre of the ridge a triangular fortress, whose apex towards the British was Zonnebeke. It was Gough's aim on the 26th to storm this.

Zonnebeke, now a straggling patch of dilapidated brickwork, and its environs were garrisoned by the 2nd and 49th regiments of the German 23rd Reserve Division, and by some of the Prussian 3rd Guards troops. Behind them on the slopes and summit of the ridge back to Nieuwemolen and Broodseinde were disposed the reserves firing over the village at the advancing British. From brick-kilns and a row of redoubts stretching between Zonnebeke Château and the Polygon Wood racecourse, east of the similar barrier carried

by the Australians on the 20th, machine guns and rifles poured bullets on Gough's troops, who were east of the Ypres-Roulers railway. Plumer's Australians were being thrown against these obstacles, but until they were over-run



[New Zealand official photograph.]

#### TELEPHONIST RECEIVING THE RANGES FOR HIS BATTERY.

it was difficult to approach the solid ruins of the Château and to enter the village from the south. To attack it from the west it was necessary to work up and cross the railway embankment, while to turn it by the north the British on Hill 35 and in Zevenkote would have to wade through the Zonnebeek and with their comrades descending Hill 37 cross the Lange-marck road, mastering the strong points of Toronto and Van Isackere Farms, and then, bearing to the right, storm Bostin Farm, the Windmill Cabaret on Hill 40, and below it the station redoubt and the dug-outs in the railway embankment. Machine guns on Hill 40 were able to sweep the cross-roads in the middle of the village, and it was necessary, therefore, to take the Windmill Cabaret.

At 5.50 a.m. in the misty half-light the English, Scottish and Welsh troops, with the Australians on their right, set out on their perilous enterprise. On the left, after a severe tussle, the concreted cellars of Toronto and Van Isackere Farms were secured and the Lange-marck-Zonnebeke road crossed. The British then paused for a while. About 7 a.m. the



mist disappeared and our advance was resumed. The swamp at Bostin Farm caused a temporary check. While the barrage rolled up the slopes of Hill 40, our men worked their way round the swamp and encircled the redoubt in the centre of it. Leaving it behind them to be reduced later, they mounted the knoll and attacked the Windmill Cabaret. From the Gravenstafel Spur and the Passchendaele Ridge a constant stream of reinforcements



[Canadian War Records.]

**GENERAL CURRIE INSPECTS A GERMAN  
HELMET RIDDLED BY SHRAPNEL.**

poured on to Hill 40, and despite every effort of our valiant troops, when night fell the Windmill Cabaret was still in the possession of the Germans.

In the meantime the Prussian Guards in the station redoubt, the embankment dug-outs, and the ruins of St. Joseph's Institute, a large building at the western outskirts of the village, had fought with desperate courage; but in vain. The station redoubt was stormed, and the dug-outs and Institute carried. On the south the ruins of the Château were cleared of its garrison and the village was entered. There was a bitter contest round the church, but at the end of the day it and the remaining buildings of Zonnebeke were in our hands. The Germans in the cemetery on the road to Brood-

seinde and in Mill Farm were, however, holding out, and no attempt was made by us to push up the slopes of the ridge to the east. Apart from his repulse at Hill 40, Gough had achieved his objects on the 26th. The apex of the triangular fortress had been captured.

In the reduction of Zonnebeke the Australians on the left of Plumer's 2nd Army who had been heavily barraged between 4 and 5 a.m. had played a decisive part. At 5.50 a.m. they moved on the brick-kilns and the pill-boxes between Zonnebeke Château and Polygon Wood. They were opposed mostly by Poles, who showed little enthusiasm for the cause of their oppressors. The brick-kilns and redoubts were gained at small expense.

Besides assisting the English, Scottish and Welsh troops to capture Zonnebeke, the Australians had been ordered by Plumer to evict the enemy from the Polygon racecourse and the eastern half of the shattered wood. The racecourse, a parallelogram with oval ends, a quarter of a mile long, had three redoubts in its centre, two near the winning post, and others where the stands had once been. To the north-east of the racecourse was a mound, protected by machine-guns in concrete emplacements. This point, it was said, had been an observation post of Sir Douglas Haig during the First Battle of Ypres. Fighting with great dash, the Australians bombed and took the redoubts and mound and, these reduced, with rifle and bayonet drove the enemy from the rest of the area. They had taken 300 prisoners and 16 machine-guns.

Emerging from it into the fields on the Passchendaele Ridge between Broodseinde and Reutel, they found themselves confronted by another line of pill-boxes and the fortified ruins of the hamlet of Molenaarelsthoek, north-east of the wood and just west of the Broodseinde-Becelaere road. Halting at 8.30 a.m. they dug themselves in and prepared to receive the counter-attacks—which were not long in coming.

A part of the Passchendaele Ridge at the southern end was now definitely under the control of the British. If it was not recovered, Sixt von Arnim had to expect that Plumer from Polygon Wood would work his way northwards along the ridge towards Passchendaele, while Gough from Zonnebeke and the Gravenstafel Spur would assault its western face. Consequently the German commander



sent forward against the Australians the large forces he had been directing on Becelaere the day before. Every German battery within reach was directed on Polygon Wood, and during the remainder of the day counter-attack succeeded counter-attack. The German local reserves were soon exhausted in the process. But in the afternoon the fresh 236th Division made its appearance. It was brought up by motor omnibuses to Keibergand. There, encountering British shell fire, it was marched to Noordendhoek, between Broodseinde and Becelaere, less than a mile to the east of Polygon Wood. At 5 p.m. these reinforcements were deployed for an advance across the fields, but the British barrage seemed so formidable that the Germans did not attempt to cross it until about 7 p.m., when the failing light made it more difficult for our gunners to regulate their fire. Suddenly three waves of enemy troops were perceived, marching across the fields. Under our shell fire they visibly melted away; but the survivors, whose shouts became more and more distinct to the Australians, pressed forward. The three waves became one confused mass, urged on by their officers. Already they were within a hundred or so yards of the Australians, who had coolly reserved their fire. Then rifles and

machine-guns poured forth volleys into the advancing foe. They fell in swathes, and those who were unhit would not face the bayonets of our men. The Australians in hot pursuit captured several of the retreating Germans.

Thus ended the sixth and last counter-attack delivered by Sixt von Armin on the 26th for the recovery of Polygon Wood. The numbers of prisoners taken by the Australians had been increased since the early morning to 600.

South of Polygon Wood to the Ypres-Menin road, where our line the day before had been bent back towards Northampton Farm and Veldhoek, English and Scottish troops prolonged the right of the Australians. At 5.50 a.m. they moved forward in the soft, sticky ground on both sides of the Reutelbeek, relieving the two companies of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders cut off by the German counter-attacks on the 25th. The enemy was loath to yield his ground, and it was not until late in the afternoon that the fighting round Cameron House turned definitely in our favour, and the Germans retired sullenly into the pill-boxed Polderhoek Wood, which, like Polygon Wood, was a wood only in name.

The retirement of the enemy in this quarter



[Australian official photograph.]

AUSTRALIAN RELIEFS GOING UP TO THE FRONT LINE.



coincided with the failure of Sixt von Armin's counter-attacks on the Australians, but it was also largely due to the conspicuous success of the English troops east of the quadrilateral redoubt on the Tower Hamlets Ridge south of the Ypres-Menin road. After an hour or so's hard fighting they captured the German works overlooking the valley of the Gladjebeek. An unobstructed view was obtained of the area between Becelaere and Gheluvelt and also of Zandvoorde. A powerful counter-attack from the direction of Gheluvelt was repulsed, as were four others in the afternoon. These latter counter-attacks were part of Sixt von Armin's great counter-offensive between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., when four times he ineffectually threw his infantry at our new front.

Such was the second of the battles of the fortnight's fighting which formed the third phase of the great struggle in 1917 for the Passchendaele Ridge. We had captured 1,600 prisoners, the whole of the Tower Hamlets Ridge, the Polygon Wood sector of the Passchendaele Ridge, Zonnebeke on the western slopes of those heights, and we had advanced up the Gravenstafel Spur towards its junction

with them. Our airmen, who met with strong opposition from the enemy's fighting machines, had powerfully contributed to our victory. They had observed the enemy and directed the artillery fire, which had been of enormous assistance in the struggle, and from altitudes of 100 feet and upwards they had fired some 30,000 rounds at the German infantry. On one occasion they had stampeded the teams of three guns. Seven enemy machines had been brought down, three driven down out of control, but no less than thirteen of ours were reported missing. As five enemy machines were brought down by the fire of our infantry, it is apparent that the German airmen were now imitating our aviators' tactics.

As before, Sixt von Armin and his superiors endeavoured to minimize the German defeat, and even to present it to the publics of the Central European Powers, Bulgaria, Turkey, and neutrals as a victory. The reader will have some difficulty in recognizing the battle just described in the following German *communiqué*, published on September 27:

FRONT OF CROWN PRINCE RUPPRECHT.—The battle in Flanders yesterday raged uninterruptedly from



[Official photograph.]

MEN JUST OUT OF THE TRENCHES DRAWING RATIONS FROM THE QUARTER-MASTER'S STORES.



[Official photograph.]

## AN AMMUNITION DUMP ON THE MENIN ROAD.

A scraper levelling the ground for further stores.

the early morning till far into the night. It continued till the morning in minor engagements. The battle-tried Fourth Army has again withstood the British assault. Troops belonging to every German province have a share in the success of the day, which brought the enemy even less gain of territory than the battle of September 20.

Drumfire of unprecedented intensity introduced the attack. Behind a wall of dust and smoke the English infantry broke forward between Mangelaere (north of Langemark) and Hollebeke, often accompanied by Tanks. The enemy, assaulting repeatedly on both sides of Langemark, was repulsed every time by our fire and in hand-to-hand fighting. From the region to the east of St. Julien to the Menin-Ypres road the English succeeded in breaking into our defensive zone to a depth of one kilometre (five-eighths of a mile), where bitter and variable battles took place throughout the day.

By means of shifting his massed artillery effect the enemy attempted to check the advance and interference of our reserves. The iron will of our regiments broke through the violence of the enemy's fire. The enemy was driven back at many points in a fresh assault.

Especially stubborn fighting took place at the roads radiating from Zonnebeke towards the west, and, in the evening, for the possession of Gheluvelt. The village remained in our possession. Farther south, as far as the Comines-Ypres Canal, repeated assaults of the English broke down without results and with heavy losses.

The enemy has not renewed his attacks up to the present. At least 12 English divisions were employed at the front. They have not shaken the firmness of our defence.

On Thursday, September 27, the Australians from Polygon Wood crossed the Reutelbeek, west of the Polderhoek Wood, and the English and Scottish troops reached the objectives

assigned to them on the morning of the 26th. The loss of Polygon Wood and Tower Hamlets Ridge, and the heavy casualties sustained by him, obliged the enemy to withdraw his line slightly in this sector. Isolated strong points south of Tower Hamlets Ridge were also reduced, and in the evening a determined effort of the enemy to recapture Zonnebeke was baffled by artillery, rifle and machine-gun fire. In the morning of Friday, September 28, a strong party of Germans approached Polygon Wood from the east, but was killed or captured. The previous night an enemy machine-gun detachment had been surprised by one of our light machine-gun teams. Most of the detachment had been put out of action and the gun was taken.

Though his confidence must have been severely shaken by the battles of September 20 and 26, Sixt von Armin had not yet lost all hope of retrieving his defeats. On September 29 he made preparations for renewing the struggle. "Every party of men advancing to the attack," a German Order of the Day enjoined, "should do so with fixed bayonets, at the same time bursting into loud 'Hurrahs!' Experience shows that the English had never withstood an infantry charge carried out in this way." Apparently the



German records on this procedure were very imperfect.

The next day (Sunday, September 30), early in the morning, the value of the above specific was tested. After a violent bombardment of our positions between the Reutelbeek and the southern end of the Tower Hamlets Ridge, large bodies of Germans attacked, first along the right bank of the stream and later astride the Ypres-Menin road. The first attack was beaten off with machine-gun and rifle fire; the second, delivered under cover of a smoke barrage, was accompanied by flame-throwing detachments. It succeeded temporarily in depriving us of an advanced post. It was immediately recovered by a counter-attack with the bayonet, which yielded us prisoners and machine guns. From this it would seem that the bayonet was more the friend of the British than of the Germans. A third attack, also astride the Ypres-Menin road, was broken by artillery fire.

At 5.30 a.m. on Monday, October 1, Sixt von Armin attacked east of Polygon Wood on a front of over a mile. Three German waves advanced, but suffered heavy casualties from the rifle fire and artillery barrage, and were driven back in disorder. Twice in the next three hours the attempt was made to recover the "Wood," but the only gains secured by the enemy were two small points opposite the south-east corner of the area. This trifling success was duly magnified in the German *communiqué* of October 2:

During the morning our storming troops wrested from the English a portion of the fighting region at the Polygon Wood, north of the Menin-Ypres road, some 550 yards deep, and held it against strong and repeated counter-attacks. In addition to considerable casualties the enemy suffered the loss of some prisoners.

Shortly before dawn on Wednesday, October 3, the German batteries heavily bombarded our positions between Polygon Wood and Tower Hamlets redoubts. At dawn the enemy infantry attempted to advance, but, except north of the Ypres-Menin road, where a few of them penetrated our artillery barrage, was completely repulsed by shell fire. Our men with bomb and bayonet killed, wounded or captured the handful who reached our lines.

In the evening the spell of fine weather was broken by a great gale and rain from the south-west. Once more Sir Douglas Haig experienced ill-luck, for he had fixed the next day for the third of the operations, which was to terminate this phase of the battle.

So far, for the main operations. But the history of the month of September would be incomplete without some reference to the minor collisions which took place between the opposing forces. A war does not consist solely of pitched battles, the smaller encounters may often be of considerable significance; at any rate they involve losses which when totalled up are by no means negligible. Very little is to be found in the newspapers concerning them, nor is much attention directed to the incessant night bombardments which exact their toll of casualties, not only from the troops in front line but in localities situated at considerable distances from it. Yet all these cause the loss of life. Of the aerial bombings there is very little that can be said, our casualties were not published; but of the minor fighting incidents there is more to be related. During September, apart from artillery duels and aerial combats and bombing, there was virtually stagnation on the front between Langemark and the North Sea, as there was between the Lys and La Bassée, although South of Lombartzyde, on the night of September 11-12, the British, and on the morning of September 17, the Germans, executed raids. Ours was successful, the enemy's was not. After sunset on September 4 the Germans raided our lines in the neighbourhood of Armentières, but were driven off by rifle and machine-gun fire. Some hours later they unsuccessfully attacked the Portuguese trenches farther south. The next night there were patrol encounters and local fighting east of Fleurbaix and of the road from Armentières to Neuve Chapelle. On the morning of September 6 the enemy twice advanced east of Armentières. The first assault was repulsed by rifle and machine-gun fire. After an intense bombardment a second attack was delivered. The Germans entered our trenches, but were promptly bayoneted. On the 15th, at dawn, the Germans attacked the British, this time not east but south of Armentières, and the Portuguese, near Neuve Chapelle. They were soon sent flying back to their lines. Early in the morning of the 24th the enemy raided west of La Bassée, but only succeeded in capturing one of our men. In this sector it is apparent that both sides were awaiting the result of the Third Battle of Ypres.

Between the west of La Bassée and the point south-east of Arras, where the British line turned south-eastwards in the direction of Cambrai, there was more activity, but less than

there had been in August. The demonstrations round Lens which had preceded, accompanied and followed the second phase of the struggle east of Ypres had served their turn by attracting the enemy's attention, and Sir Douglas Haig did not press home the attack on the city. Nevertheless there were occasional encounters of a more or less serious character north and south of the ruined town. On the night of September 1-2 the Germans raided our lines south-west of La Bassée and north-west of Lens. In both cases they were repulsed. The next night on the Scarpe Heights south-east of

day progress was made in Avion and east of Eleu-dit-Leauvette in the same region. Some hours later a successful raid was carried out by us in the neighbourhood of Gavrelle between Lens and Arras. This operation was repeated in the night of the 8th-9th, when, too, north of Lens we raided east of Versailles.

During the night of the 12th-13th our men north of Gavrelle entered the German lines near Oppy, and in the afternoon of the 15th and the night of the 15th-16th Durham troops broke into the enemy's trenches south of Monchy-le-Preux and west of Cherisy, where



[Official photograph.]

#### MAKING A ROAD ON WESTHOEK RIDGE.

Monchy-le-Preux we surprised the enemy, destroyed his dug-outs and machine guns and captured 18 prisoners. About midnight (September 3-4) the Canadians in brilliant moonlight went over from our lines opposite Cité Ste. Elizabeth, north of Lens, and while the Germans were repelling them another party of Canadians farther south established posts on a front of 600 yards, 250 yards nearer the centre of the city. Some unwounded soldiers of the 2nd Prussian Guard Reserve Regiment and 4 machine guns fell into our hands. On the morning of September 6 the Canadian line south-west of Lens was slightly advanced and a counter-attack repulsed. The ensuing

they entered the outskirts of the village. Dug-outs and defences were completely wrecked, 70 Germans killed, many wounded and captured and two machine guns taken. There was severe fighting of a local character on the 16th-17th north of the Scarpe round the Arras-Douai railway and south-east of Gavrelle. On the morning of the 18th a hostile party, trying to approach our trenches south of Méricourt and east of Vimy, was repulsed, as also was one emerging from the western suburbs of Lens on the 20th-21st. In the Monchy-le-Preux region we beat off a raid and carried out one successfully on September 22. Under cover of a powerful bombard-

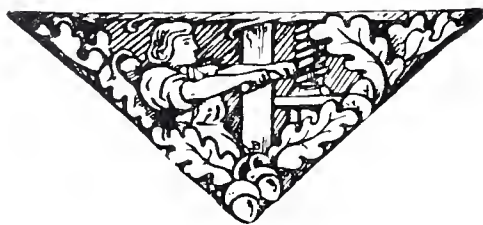


ment the enemy twice attacked at this point in the morning of the 24th, and also between the Arras-Douai railway and the Scarpe. In all three cases the hostile forces were repulsed, leaving a number of dead behind them. The next day, September 25, there was a bombing encounter north-west of Lens, in which the enemy got the worse of the encounter. In the morning of the 29th the Germans attacked two of our posts on Hill 70, but were beaten off by the Canadians after a sharp encounter. On the 30th at dawn the enemy raided east of Loos, but was counter-attacked and pursued across No Man's Land, losing heavily, and on October 1-2 the intentions of a hostile party advancing in the southern suburbs of Lens were frustrated by gun and rifle fire.

It was in the southernmost sector of the British—viz., that between the west of Bullecourt and the north of St. Quentin—that the storm centres outside the Ypres salient were to be found in September, 1917. On the night of September 2-3 the enemy, after a heavy bombardment, made another ineffectual attempt south-west of Havrincourt and south of the Bapaume-Cambrai railway to capture our advanced posts. Some twenty-four hours afterwards, farther to the north on the Scarpe side of the Bapaume-Cambrai chaussée, a party of our men rushed a post west of Quéant and secured a machine gun. At dawn on September 9 Northumberland troops south-east of Hargicourt and east of Villeret stormed 600 yards of German trenches near the Scheldt-Somme Canal, capturing 52 prisoners and two trench mortars. Simultaneously our line east of Malakoff Farm was rounded off by the taking of a small enemy work. In the course of the

night of the 10th-11th the Northumberland troops extended their gains southwards, evicting the Germans from another stretch of trenches 400 yards long. The next morning masses of the enemy attacked them, but were driven off with shells and bullets, and later in the day two bombing attacks were repulsed. At dawn on the 12th our lines east of Hargicourt were heavily barraged and attacked without success. The night before we had raided the enemy's positions north-east of Bullecourt. On the night of 12th-13th east of that wrecked village the British in their turn were raided. The Germans, who managed to burst into our lines, were, after sharp fighting, expelled. In the night of September 16-17 we raided east of Epéhy (north of Hargicourt), towards the Scheldt-Somme Canal. A German attack on the 20th-21st west of Havrincourt was repulsed, and in the night of the 22nd-23rd between Havrincourt and Epéhy some Glasgow troops north-east of Gouzeaucourt captured several prisoners and destroyed many dug-outs. The next morning the Germans, trying to retake the position lost by them east of Villeret on the 9th, were badly defeated. During the night of the 24th-25th we entered the German trenches and took some prisoners. South of Quéant at dawn on the 25th a German party stormed a British post and returned with two prisoners. Lastly, in the night of the 25th-26th Suffolk troops east of Gouzeaucourt destroyed two dug-outs, bayoneted or captured their garrisons and returned safely with a machine gun.

These various excursions gained valuable information as to the dispositions of the enemy, which were of great utility in arranging for subsequent offensive movements against him.



## CHAPTER CCXXXVII.

# BRITISH ISLAND COLONIES AND THE WAR.

THE "MISCELLANEOUS" BRITISH EMPIRE—COLONIES AND PROTECTORATES—EFFORT OF THE WEST INDIES—JAMAICA—TRINIDAD AND BARBADOS—BRITISH GUIANA AND BRITISH HONDURAS—LEEWARD AND WINDWARD ISLES—THE ISLANDS' OFFER OF MEN REFUSED—CONTINGENTS SUBSEQUENTLY ACCEPTED—"THE BRITISH WEST INDIES REGIMENT" FORMED—ITS TRAINING AND SERVICES—A BATTALION'S ARCTIC ORDEAL—COLONIES' SHIELDS OF HONOUR—THE PACIFIC ISLANDS AND THEIR NATIVES—FIJI—THE "FIJI PLATOON" AND THE K.R.R.'S—A SUCCESSFUL RUSE OF WAR—CEYLON—OTHER ISLANDS IN ALL THE SEAS.

WHEN the Great War broke out the British Empire could be classified broadly under three large heads according to its administration by the Home Government, the Dominion Governments, and the Government of India; but as soon as one began to subdivide the territories outside the British Isles administered by the Home Government, one became surrounded at once by a fog of perplexity. Perhaps the official designation of "Crown Colonies and Protectorates" is as comprehensive and accurate as any that can be devised, although it must be stretched to include some portions of the earth's surface whose inhabitants would have refused to admit that either half of the title accurately described their status. It is with the insular part of this section of the British Empire in its connexion with the Great War that this chapter is intended to deal; and the difficulty of presenting the details of the subject in any defined order or sequence increases with every step.

When, for instance, we come to consider the seemingly homogeneous group of geographical units classed under the title of the "British West Indies," we find that for the purpose of this war the group thus defined did not coincide

with the territories which formed the recruiting ground of the British West Indies Regiment, so that if we limit our view to the British West Indies proper, excluding the colonies of British Guiana on the mainland of South America and British Honduras in Central America, we subdivide an Imperial effort that loyal enthusiasm has unified, and are still left to deal with a list of colonies administered by various Governments of different status and as widely separated almost in the conditions making for efficient military and financial assistance to the King's Government as any parts of the same empire could possibly be. Indeed the reason why so ostensibly desirable an ideal as the Federation of the West Indian Colonies had made such poor progress before the war was due to the fact that when the interests of the various islands were separately considered they were more often found to be divergent and even conflicting than parallel or harmonious. Like creatures whose form and structure have been evolved by natural selection, their condition was the combined result of heredity and environment, and as the former went back to their widely different origins as component parts of the British Empire, so the latter was complicated by the reaction of many external forces of which



the three strongest—attachment to the Motherland, attraction towards the Dominion of Canada, and temptation to share the fiscal advantages of the United States—had certainly not pulled in the same direction, nor affected the various islands in equal proportions in the past. Indeed the fact that populations differing so widely in their conditions, interests and views as, say, Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad, not to mention the smaller islands which had still less in common, should have been so unanimously enthusiastic in their loyal desire to assist Great Britain in the earliest stages of the

Malay States of Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah and Perlis, as well as the State of Johore, of which the Sultan of Johore ruled the province of Muar? For the average British taxpayer the Straits Settlements, as officially limited, would make a stiff lesson in geography; and so would even such a simple-seeming unit as the "Pacific Islands," with its eight sub-heads of Solomon Isles, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Tonga or Friendly Isles, Phoenix Islands, Pitcairn Island, Fanning Island, New Hebrides, and, lastly, "Miscellaneous Islands." Thus, even in subdividing the "Miscellaneous," we come to



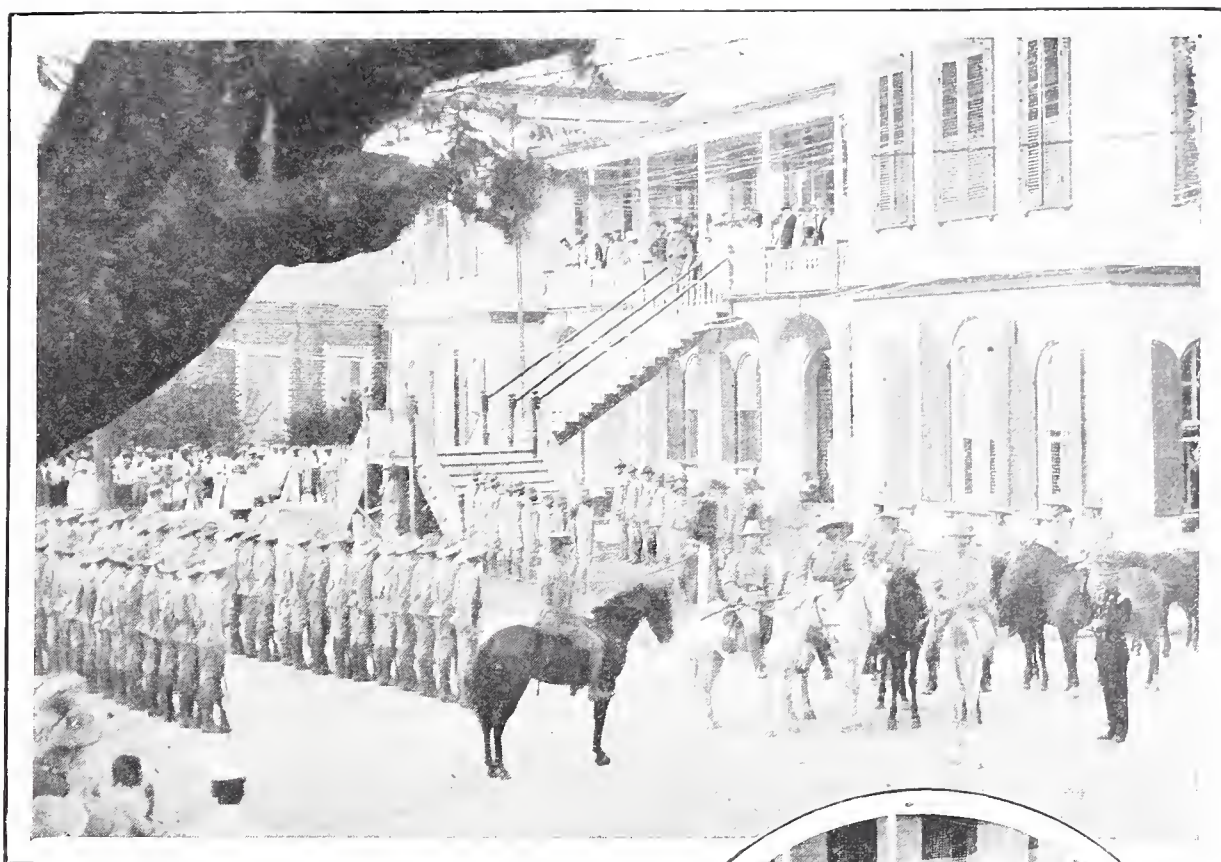
THE WEST INDIES.

war, was doubtless one of the many unpleasant shocks which the Kaiser's advisers experienced in 1914.

Other sections of the "Miscellaneous" compartment of the British collection of territories, which similarly disappointed the Germans, would equally defy any system of rigid classification. What definition, for instance, could be invented to apply to the "Straits Settlements" unit of administration when this included, directly, Singapore with Labuan and Cocos-Keeling Islands, Christmas Island, Penang with Province Wellesley and the Dindings Territory and Malacca, besides—in varying degrees of direct or indirect control—the Federated Malay States, the Feudatory

"Miscellaneous" still. Alexander, dreaming of worlds to conquer, was easily shown the limit of his ambition. Could he have been employed in dealing with the details of the British Empire, he might have realized the joy of an ambition that had no apparent end.

Perhaps, then, the best method to give the reader a general idea of the way in which the scattered colonies of the Atlantic and Pacific rallied in support of the King's Government in the Great War will be to take one of these "portmanteau" sections of Colonial Office administration and empty out its contents, so to speak, in order that they may all be at least cursorily examined. Then we shall realize how completely the sentiment of



#### TERRITORIALS AT BRITISH HONDURAS

Waiting to receive the new Governor, Mr. W. Hart Bennett, C.M.G., 1918.

loyalty to the Empire in a good cause swept away time-honoured distinctions, erased deep-seated prejudices, spurned geographical distance and even overrode all selfish interests. Those territories which possessed wealth lavished it with both hands for the cause; those which were engrossed in trade competition co-operated in sacrifice with their late rivals, and those which had only their sons' lives to give offered them without reserve. Mention has already been made of the West Indies as including many diverse units; and this group will serve to illustrate our subject as well as any other in many respects and better than any in one. For it gave to the armed forces of the Empire, in the British West Indies Regiment, with its numerous battalions, one of the most remarkable examples of successful military amalgamation in the annals of war.

In most British minds Jamaica and the West Indies seem almost convertible terms; and, indeed, from almost every point of view the island of Jamaica must occupy a large part of the West Indian foreground. But particularly is this true of the tourist, with grateful recollections of Kingston's more than comfortable hotels, with memories of sunrise on the Blue Moun-



THE NEW GOVERNOR RECEIVED BY CHIEF JUSTICE RODEN (at top of steps).

tains, of the song of the "Jamaica nightingale" mocking bird, of its buildings draped in rosy-purple bougainvillea and white-trumpeted beaumontia, of its butterflies and humming birds, its palms, bamboos and pineapples, and, over all, its wondrous sunlight; its palatial buildings and fine wide thoroughfares, with such home-sounding names as King's House, Bishop's Lodge, King Street with its statue of Queen Victoria, Hope and Castleton Gardens, with lovely surrounding scenery and well-behaved negroes—such memory of Jamaica recalls the description of Columbus, "A paradise and worth more than gold."



From the capital of Jamaica memory passes with unabated pleasure to Spanish Town, with its old King's House and Court House, its Rodney Memorial and cathedral with Bacon's statues; its quaintly humorous transliteration



[Elliott & Fry.]

**BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM H. MANNING, K.C.M.G.,**  
Governor of Jamaica.

of old Spanish names into English equivalents, as Bogwater for Boca de Agua and Wagwater for Agua Alta; its bread-fruit and grape-fruit, bananas and cocoanuts. Yet perhaps it is Annotto Bay which is remembered best as "real Jamaica," unchanging because deliciously unchangeable, or Port Antonio and the fine mineral springs in the hills. Even trade in Jamaica seems free from the sordid element, presenting a changing kaleidoscope of scene and colour, fruit everywhere, especially bananas, besides the famous rum and ginger, cocoa, coffee, allspice or pimento, tobacco, ebony and logwood. Of all this riot of produce only the allspice is indigenous: all the others are successful introductions to a peerless soil and climate. No wonder that the wealth of Jamaica had grown; and it was scarcely possible to set limits to the island's future possibilities, since the Panama Canal had seemed to make it the natural trade centre of two oceans. There was a reverse side to the picture, of course, the darkest shade being the island's liability to catastrophe from earthquakes; but each disaster seemed merely

the punctuation between periods of buoyant prosperity. In the same way, it appeared impossible that any of the recurrent political issues could ever seriously affect the upward evolution of the leading West Indian community, since it enjoyed the two great blessings of an entire absence of friction over the "colour line," thanks to British methods based on missionary efforts, and a deep sense of abiding loyalty, based upon personal devotion to the Crown. Though complaints of step-motherly neglect by the Home Government may have been rife upon occasion, Jamaica was more than well qualified by prosperity, contentment and loyalty to take the lead in the great movement of the West Indies generally in support of the King and the Empire in the Great War. How much reason we had to be grateful that this should be the final outcome of the relations



[Elliott & Fry.]

**MAJOR SIR JOHN R. CHANCELLOR,**  
K.C.M.G.,  
Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Trinidad and Tobago.

between the Mother Country—sometimes bitterly referred to as "Mr. Mother-Country," when Colonial feelings had been more than usually hurt and local speakers or writers were ventilating the grievance—must be realized by anyone who impartially considers the ancient complaints of the Colony. However excellent our intentions may have been, it was too much, for instance, to expect patriotic Jamaicans to see the justice of fiscal arrange-





CROWD AT PORT OF SPAIN CHEERING A TRINIDAD CONTINGENT OF THE BRITISH WEST INDIES REGIMENT, OCTOBER 1915.

ments regarding the coffee and cocoa industries of the island, against which Great Britain had a Protective Tariff, while the United States, our trade rival at their very gates, granted them free import. There is no space here to discuss the merits of this or any other of the numerous causes of friction in Britain's Colonial policy of bygone years; but they must be taken into account in estimating the surprising depth and strength of the tide of Jamaican loyalty in the great crisis.

Those who know the West Indies best, however, would be the last to assent to the visitor's superficial view that Jamaica and the West Indies are practically synonymous. Barbados, Trinidad and Bahamas, as well as the wreaths and clusters of the Windward and Leeward islands, to say nothing of the large territories of British Honduras and British Guiana, which stand at the western and eastern outlets of the Caribbean Sea, must all be taken into almost equal consideration in recording even a rough idea of the community to which the fine collective effort of the British West Indies must be credited.

Of these factors Trinidad, nearly of the same size as, say, Lancashire, with a population of about one-third of a million, deserved most prominent mention, and with it the adjacent smaller island of Tobago is always conveniently associated. Although Jamaica, Grenada and Dominica might be more beautiful than Trinidad, and therefore seem more blessed by nature, none could vie with it in prosperity.

From its exceedingly fertile soil cocoa had long been the chief crop, sugar coming next and cocoanuts third; but of greater value than the last was the asphalt, won by negro labour from the great Pitch Lake; and the production of oil and rubber was already making rapid strides to the front rank when the War broke out. Already, too, Trinidad was paying the price of wealth won from its mineral resources in scenery spoilt all round the oilfields, where the palms and other tropical trees, with their lovely drapery of creepers and orchids, were blasted by the fumes of furnaces. But perhaps the most marked in its effects of all the factors of Trinidad's commercial activity was the constant influx of East Indians, whose thrifty habits soon raised them almost to the position of a moneyed middle class in the island, insomuch that the negro peasant, who a few years previously had taken life so easily that he thought it beneath his dignity to plant rice, might have been seen working, both men and women, in rice fields owned by East Indians. For the stern business of war, however, the strength and physical courage of the Trinidad black, with the imperturbable good nature which characterized all his race, were the factors which counted in piling up the ammunition behind the guns in the firing lines in France. In the earliest days of the war, however, the help which Trinidad sent across the Atlantic consisted rather in the eager contingent of white men of British blood, recruited and paid for, as in other islands, by



the loyal efforts of Merchants' Committees and sent over to England, where they were enlisted at once in British regiments.

Turning to Barbados, even the most casual visitor must have been struck by the contrast which it presented in almost every respect, except loyal enthusiasm for war service, to the other islands. It was so pre-eminently "British." One could see, of course, that it was still a tropical coral island covered with its layer of fertile volcanic dust, through which the roads were cut, white and smooth, to the coral beneath, between fields of sugar cane, with patches of millet and yellow-flowering dhâl, and groves of dark mahogany trees. But the quiet and level aspect of the landscape nevertheless was distinctly untropical, and at every turn some "all-British" detail heightened the impression expressed in Barbados's title of "Little England." Especially was this so in Bridgetown itself, with its slate-roofed houses of red brick and its very British tangle of shipping, almost making one forget the negroes who thronged the white roads in the glaring sun; but the most homelike details often contained tropical surprises, such as a fishing boat coming ashore with its catch—of flying fish! In Barbados the negro, who always died out in Jamaica, increased and multiplied, until before the war the blacks were three times as numerous to the square

mile as the population in Britain, but the Barbadian negro showed no tendency to emigrate to other islands, where the climate was more relaxing and the light work of cocoa cultivation better suited to the imported coolies from India than to his strenuous African physique. In labour on the Panama Canal, however, he had found a temporary outlet that was perfectly adapted to his powers, though the high wages rather spoiled him for Barbadian home life afterwards. So it was no wonder that the Great War found in the island a native recruiting ground as rich and ready to help as were the white merchants themselves, who sent home gifts in money of £20,000 and £40,000 at a time to aid the King's Government. Barbados's traditional jealousy of Trinidad, which had obstructed the proposed federation of the West Indies with Port of Spain in Trinidad as the capital, put no obstruction at any rate in the way of uniting their contributions of men, money and material for the common cause.

In point of size, of course, British Guiana, almost better known once as Demerara, should have come as easily first among the West Indian territories, as it surpassed all in its lavish tropical life and riotous colouring. Even Georgetown, its capital, struck the visitor like some rare combination of Kew Gardens and the Zoo, as it were, with its



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TRINIDAD.

gigantic blue waterlilies, the *Victoria regia*, not displayed in single majesty under a glass dome, as at Kew, but multiplying at large in water trenches by the wide streets, with quaint long-toed birds, the jacanas, specially evolved to walk upon the floating leaves, with multitudinous fire-flies dancing at nightfall, cicadas shrilling and tree frogs everywhere. But neither geographical extent nor tropical luxuriance necessarily spelt commercial prosperity; and the outbreak of the Great War found British Guiana with scarcely one per cent. of its land settled. Its population, chiefly negroes and Indian coolies, was barely 300,000, the few Europeans at their head being faced with the task of developing the resources of a country as large as the United Kingdom, of which only a small part had even been thoroughly explored. The sum total of their efforts, represented by sugar estates along the alluvial coast-line, protected by sea walls and drained and navigated by canals and trenches, scarcely touched the fringe of this land of wonder, with its bread-fruit trees, bamboos and palms, its sedge-bordered lagoons where gigantic tarpon leaped and splashed and alligators lurked, its wood-ants' nests in the trees, its scarlet-and-black dragon flies and great owl butterflies, its parrots and macaws, toucans and humming birds and egrets. These decorated the real fringe of primeval British Guiana; but little was known of the wondrous scenery of the interior, whose rivers, Demerara, Berbice, Corentyn and Essequibo descended, with a fall on the Potaro tributary of the last-named four times as high as Niagara, through country which rose amid wildly extraordinary scenery to the massive height of Mount Roraima. A land of promise, indeed: but badly lacking population, drainage, irrigation and transit before that promise could begin to be fulfilled. The sugar industry, only rendered possible by imported East Indian labour, was indeed permanently successful: and it is eloquent alike of the colony's circumstances and its loyal goodwill that a recurring item in the British Treasury records of the war should be such as the following: "Gift of sugar from British Guiana sold for £17,567 9s. 9d., and the amount applied to general war expenses." Thus, in money and material, as well as in men, the colony did all and more than all that the best judges would have thought possible before the war; for the mere geographical extent of a country

affords no criterion by which its effort can be judged.

Although not classed officially among the West Indies before the war, British Honduras willingly sank its individuality in contributing



[Elliot &amp; Fry.]

SIR WILFRID COLLET, K.C.M.G.,  
Governor and Commander-in-Chief, British Guiana.

a splendid quota to the British West Indies Regiment: and in other ways it might have been reckoned as almost the counterpart, on the west of the island group, to British Guiana on the east. Both were situated on the mainlands of America; both were larger in extent than any of the islands; both were little more in point of development than cultivated fringes of sea-coast with interiors of primeval forest; and both were conspicuous for the readiness with which, in default of actual money, they placed the produce of their crops at the service of the Empire, for British Guiana's gift of sugar was balanced by the generous gift of the entire mahogany crops of British Honduras. Beside this important harvest the colony had little more than logwood and some sugar and fruits; and in sending its contingent to the British West Indies Regiment, representing a very large proportion of the males in its total population of 43,000—only three-fifths of whom spoke English—it gave that of which it stood most in need itself, namely men to develop its untapped resources. Although the contingent was delayed for over four months after recruitment, owing to unfortunate difficulties of transport, the colony cheerfully bore the extra burden; and so fine was the spirit of the men themselves that discipline was admirably maintained and





EMPIRE DAY PARADE AT ANTIGUA.

punishments were almost unknown. Thus the contingent was largely trained for war before it even left the Colony, and for this, Lt.-Col. Cran, who was entirely responsible for the work of raising, maintaining and training the men before they sailed, deserved the highest credit. And what is said here of the British Honduras contingent may be applied with little alteration to all the contingents which composed the numerous battalions of the British West Indies Regiment. During all the years of the war the difficulties of transport for men, money and material from all the outlying portions of the British Empire were stupendous; and even when transport was available and ready, other hitches were almost inevitable at the first performance without rehearsal of so vast a drama as the mobilization for distant war of the entire resources of a world-wide empire that had gradually grown up in peaceful reliance upon the protection of the British Navy alone. It was only the eagerness of the entire native population to serve, and the enthusiastic co-operation of all ranks of the men selected for service which made all the separate contingents from the various Colonies so equally worthy in the end to take their places beside each other in the multiplying battalions of a homogeneous regiment.

The Leeward Islands, forming the northern half of the curved line of lesser West Indian Islands that stand as British outposts along the whole western side of the Caribbean Sea, deserved all that has been said of the fine spirit shown by the larger islands, with difference of detail only according to their circumstances and their difficulties. They were administered by the Colonial Office under the five subsections of Antigua with Barbuda, St. Kitts-Nevis with Anguilla, Dominica, Montserrat and the Virgin Islands—famous names all of them in Britain's history by sea. And here, as with the larger islands and territories, opportunity for doing Imperial service was not necessarily commensurate with geographical extent or tropical luxuriance. Antigua, with its capital Cape St. John, could not compare in beauty with most of the other islands, but it was well cultivated and prosperous, thanks largely to the Imperial Department of Agriculture. In earlier times the island had been entirely dependent upon foreign markets for the disposal of the produce of its fields of sugar cane; and when the market price





DEFENCE FORCE OF ANTIGUA.

of sugar fell, as it often did, the island starved. But the Imperial Department of Agriculture saved the situation by introducing cotton, for the growth of which the island was well fitted, giving money also and establishing a sugar factory which worked on co-operative lines. Other crops, such as millet and dahl, were added: and the result of improved conditions was seen, when the war broke out, in the increased power of the island to contribute to the common effort in the Empire's defence. It is pleasant thus to be able to record in the pre-war relations, not always harmonious, between the Mother Country and the scattered Colonial territories that the Imperial Department of Agriculture always received from the latter unstinted praise for its sympathetic and helpful policy. It is only too natural for those who are looked after by a distant authority, which is not always open to *ex parte* argument, to grumble and complain in the "Mr. Mother-Country" tone; but throughout the West Indies the Imperial Department of Agriculture was only mentioned in terms of praise similar to that bestowed upon Mr. Chamberlain's Colonial policy.

Of St. Kitts or Christopher, the "Mother of the British West Indies," almost every inch was famous ground in British history. Nelson was married there, and there the rugged mass of Brimstone Hill, "the Gibraltar of the West Indies," frowns upon the sea. There, too, is the well-known Monkey Hill, so-called from the troublesome pests that the Old World monkeys, imported in slave ships in the early days of British enterprise in the Caribbean Sea, afterwards became. But the prevailing memory of St. Kitts would always be its cultivated fertility, like a green lake with brown island mountains—chief among them the famous Mount Misery, rising to 3,700 feet. The crops which gave the fertile soil of St. Kitts its verdant aspect, were chiefly sugar cane, with cotton which occupied about one-third of the fields and also bordered those devoted to sugar cane with its flowers like white and yellow roses. Montserrat, like St. Kitts, was very richly cultivated in the south with cotton, limes and sugar, but in the north was dry and barren. At one time it had been chronically dependent upon periodic grants-in-aid from the Home Government; but, thanks to the





BRIMSTONE HILL, ST. KITTS.

introduction of cotton, none had been needed since 1906, so that the outbreak of the war found the island in a position in which it could begin to repay with loyal service some of the help received in need. Nevis, always linked with the name of St. Kitts, had before the war a population of only about 13,000, who cultivated sugar and cotton, while Anguilla, also linked with it for official purposes, maintained about 5,000 on its 35 square miles, devoted principally to the production of salt, with cattle and ponies and some sugar.

The Windward Isles, forming the southern half of the crescent of scattered British islands spanning the eastern exit of the Caribbean Sea, include three larger islands, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenada, with a number of smaller ones known collectively as the Grenadines—the largest being Carriacou, with a population of about 7,000. This and the smaller islands adjacent to and south of it, were officially united to Grenada, but the majority were linked to St. Vincent, the largest of these being Bequia, which is little more than half the size of Carriacou. Space, therefore, does not admit of separate notice of these very little children of the Empire, and brief mention only can be given to their three larger sisters. Of these St. Vincent, whose capital, Kingston, presents a lovely harbour view to the arriving visitor, had been unfortunate for many years in its staple production of arrowroot. Even when this commanded in London a retail price of 2s. 6d. a lb. for the

highest grade, the isolation of the islands and the lack of commercial organization left them so entirely at the mercy of the profiteer—a much needed word which the exigencies of the war brought later into vogue—that 1½d. per lb. was all that the producer in St. Vincent could obtain. The situation was remedied somewhat in the years preceding the war by the introduction, as in other distressed West Indian Islands, of Sea Island cotton in 1903. Nevertheless, how far St. Vincent remained from complete development is shown by the fact that, although it is only 18 miles long, the interior was so clothed with dense scrub that in 1910 an expedition took three days to explore one of its valleys. In spite of the immigration of several thousand Portuguese labourers in the middle of the nineteenth century, St. Vincent had always remained more thoroughly English than either Grenada or St. Lucia. The last-named, on the other hand, was classed with Dominica as the most French of all the West Indian islands, one result of which was that the manners of the negroes were conspicuously more polite than elsewhere, although the difference of national predilection made no distinction in the enthusiasm of the population of about 50,000 for the war. Grenada, which had considerably the largest population of the three, but still under 100,000 at the outbreak of war, also showed strong traces of its colonization by the French, although it had been a British possession since the Treaty of Versailles in 1783. It was

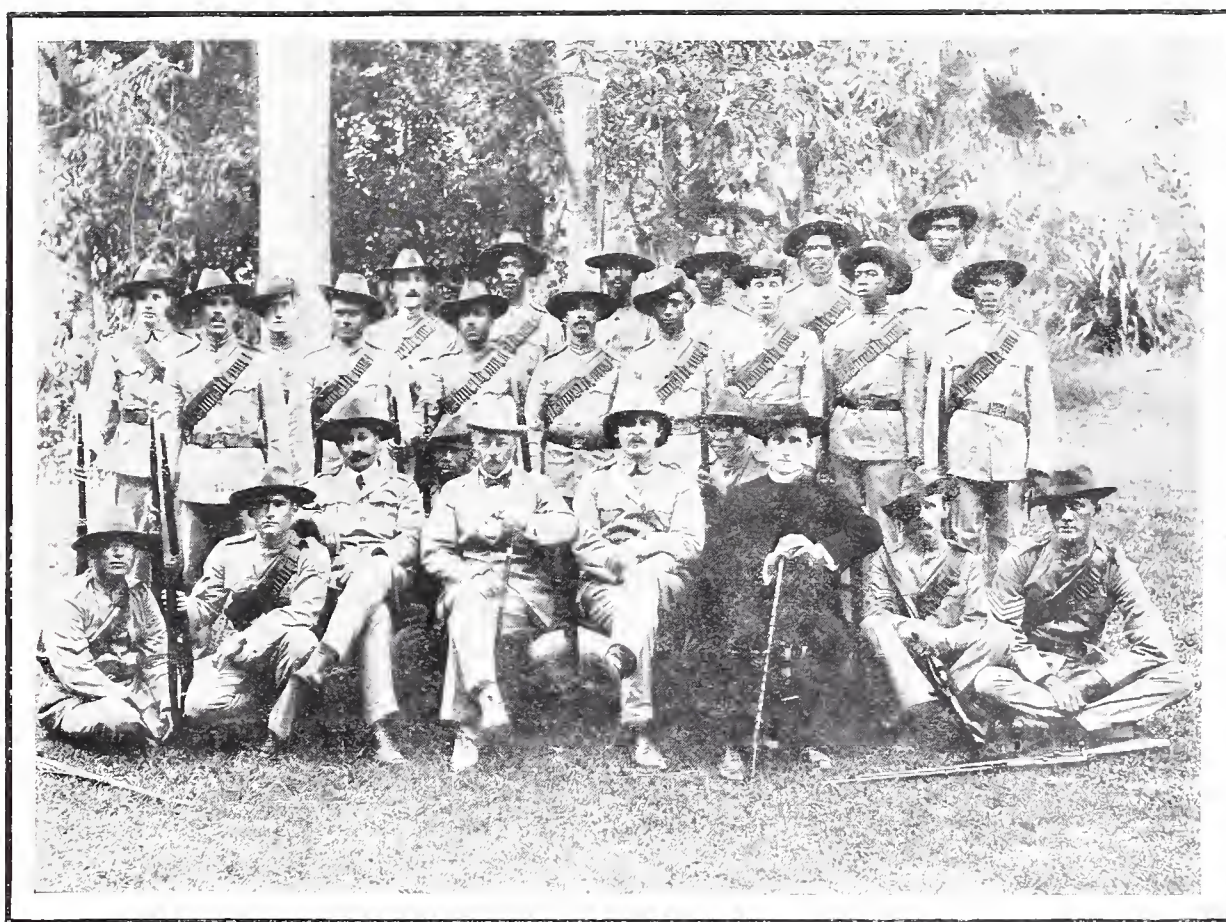


formerly better known under the title of Conception, bestowed upon it by Columbus in 1498. Its harbour was always described as the prettiest in the West Indies, and the island itself as the pleasantest to live in, well administered and socially hospitable, as the home of prosperous cocoa planters. It was also the seat of the Government of the Windward Islands, and, as might have been anticipated, proved second to none in devotion to the Empire's cause in war.

That the remaining West Indian Islands were generous also in proportion to their widely different resources may be gathered from the fact that a list of donations recorded in a single Treasury minute in 1917 included two gifts of 100 guineas each from the "Justices and Vestry" of the Cayman Islands—whose chief industry still was turtle fishing—£1,000 from Turks and Caicos Island, and £10,000 from the Bahamas. And mention of the Bahamas suggests a passing reference to the unfortunately common experience of the distant colonies whose first contributions to the Imperial forces took the shape of white contingents separately recruited and sent to England. These were not large enough to be

retained as individual units, nor could any recognisable place be assigned to them. So they were simply merged in some British regiment—in the case of the Bahamas the contingent was attached to the Lincolns—and from that moment they practically disappeared from colonial view; and later, when inquiries were made, it was generally found that from various causes a very small percentage of the contingent could be traced. This, of course, was chiefly due to casualties, but very frequently to the excellence of the men, a large proportion of the colonials being always selected for commissions or promoted to N.C.O. rank or detailed for special service. Thus the fact that a contingent had been "lost" by no means implied that it had been wasted or destroyed, and as the war progressed many of the lost sheep were found to be occupying positions of unexpected distinction.

Nevertheless, it is easily understood that the West Indian Islands and Colonies were by no means satisfied that their contributions of men should only consist of nameless contingents to be swallowed up by British regiments. They were content that their gifts in money and material should go into general funds for



DEFENCE FORCE, MONTSERRAT, 1915.

Seated in centre, left to right: Lieut. Dyett, Capt. Elgee (Acting Commissioner), Capt. Ruane, Canon Hayens.



military expenses, or be merely ear-marked for special purposes such as Red Cross work or the purchase of aeroplanes : but in the matter of their own fellow-citizens the natural desire



**FORT DUVERNÉTTE, ST. VINCENT.**

An eighteenth-century fort built by the French during their occupation of St. Vincent.

was that in some way, if only a humble way, they could retain the individuality of the land that sent them to fight for the common cause, so that their fortunes could be followed with public interest and their achievements be publicly recorded. The contingent system was adopted as a temporary makeshift but was not regarded as adequate to the Colonies' earnest hopes. The Home Government was well aware from the beginning that these hopes were generally entertained. On the outbreak of war in August, 1914, many letters in the Press testified to the eagerness of the West Indians to take a share in the conflict in Europe ; and offers of men were at once made to the King's Government. These offers were at first declined on the ground that the West Indies would be better employed in preparing to defend themselves, as they were in danger of attack by enemy raiders such as the Dresden and Karlsruhe. The refusal caused bitter disappointment, rendered the more acute by the readiness of the French to employ their Tureos, and the gallant fighting of the latter in the war's early stages. The Zouave uniform of the existing

West India Regiment, adopted at Queen Victoria's request, and the British infantry uniform of the officers, seemed to make the exclusion of our West Indians from the war the more invidious : and the Government was reminded that in the French wars Barbados's offer of armed warships was accepted and utilized in blockading French ports and scouring the Caribbean Sea.

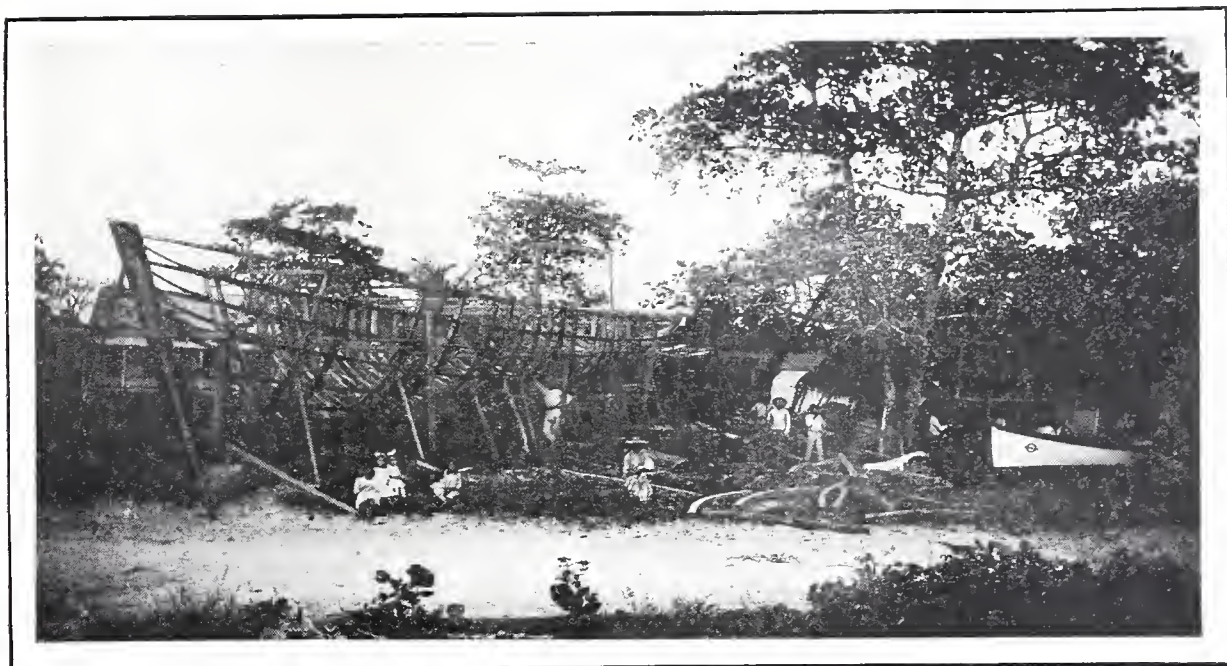
The precedent, also set during the French wars, of the acceptance of gifts of money had already been followed ; and every island which could afford to contribute anything at all promptly claimed its place among the loyal donors, from wealthy Jamaica, heading the list with £2,400,000, to the Cayman Islands, whose contribution was none the less eloquent of loyal service because it totalled only £210. Many of the amounts were contributed in kind, as sugar from British Guiana, cacao from several



**COCONUT AVENUE, ANTIGUA.**

islands and arrowroot from St. Vincent ; while some were ear-marked in various ways, as a sum of £46,000 from Trinidad, Grenada and St. Lucia for the purchase of chocolates in boxes bearing those colonies' badges for all ranks in the Expeditionary Force. Noteworthy, too, is the fact that Dominica was the first part of the Empire to devote part of its contribution to the purchase of aeroplanes—an example which has been so widely followed as doubtless to have proved an important factor in our later air supremacy.

Thus encouraged, the colonies' desire for direct participation at the front continued and



SHIPBUILDING AT GEORGE TOWN, GRAND CAYMAN.

grew, although it was not foreseen in the islands any more clearly than at home that the prolongation of the war would ultimately compel the Empire to use every man that offered service. "The worst is past," said one letter from Barbados, "but there is a lot of uphill work yet to be done"—this was in 1914—and the same confident note of early victory ran through the missives generally at that time. "Give us a chance," pleads one from Dominica. "Surely we could do garrison duty in England or guard lines of communication in Belgium and, later, on the road to Berlin!"

The continuance of this correspondence did not interrupt the active steps taken in several of the colonies—Barbados, Jamaica, British Guiana and Trinidad—to raise contingents for overseas service, whether the Home Government acceded to their desire or not. In Jamaica especially the movement was vigorously conducted by the Contingent Committee of citizens, which raised funds by voluntary subscription to send a contingent overseas. The Governor, Sir William Armstrong, supported the movement: and in May, 1915, the Home Government at last decided to accept contingents from the four colonies named. Thus a halfway house of compromise was reached: but the decision, welcome as it was, still left open the question whether future contingents would merely be absorbed as recruits for Kitchener's Army or whether they would in some way obtain the dignity of service as a separate unit or units. The hopes of the Colonies tended strongly in the latter direction:

and as manifestly the best way to obtain recognition as a separate force was to make the contingents worthy of it, the recruiting campaign was carried on with double energy during the summer months, and the fever spread quickly after this initial success gained by the four colonies named to others of the West Indian Islands as well as British Honduras. The first detachments of the British West Indies Contingent reached Seaford in the autumn of 1915 and after training for some time there they proceeded to Plymouth and thence to Egypt.

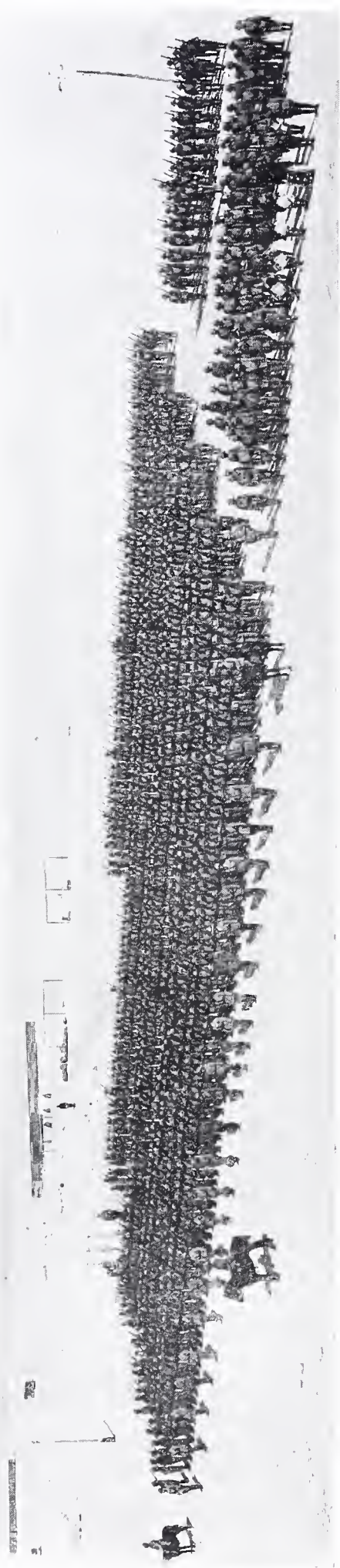
But meanwhile the distinction for which the Colonies were so keenly striving had been won. In October 26 the *London Gazette* contained the following:—

"His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve of the formation of a Corps from Contingents of the inhabitants of the West India Islands, to be entitled 'The British West Indies Regiment.'"

Thus the ambition of the loyal Colonies was justified by official sanction of the formation of a separate corps bearing their name, to take its place by the side of British regiments in the great European War.

And not many days elapsed before it made its first public appearance as a representative unit of the fighting forces of the nation. The notice in the *London Gazette* quoted above was only reproduced in the Battalion Orders of the West Indian Contingent, as the force had hitherto been known, on November 6, and three days later, in the Lord Mayor's Show of





THE BRITISH WEST INDIES REGIMENT.

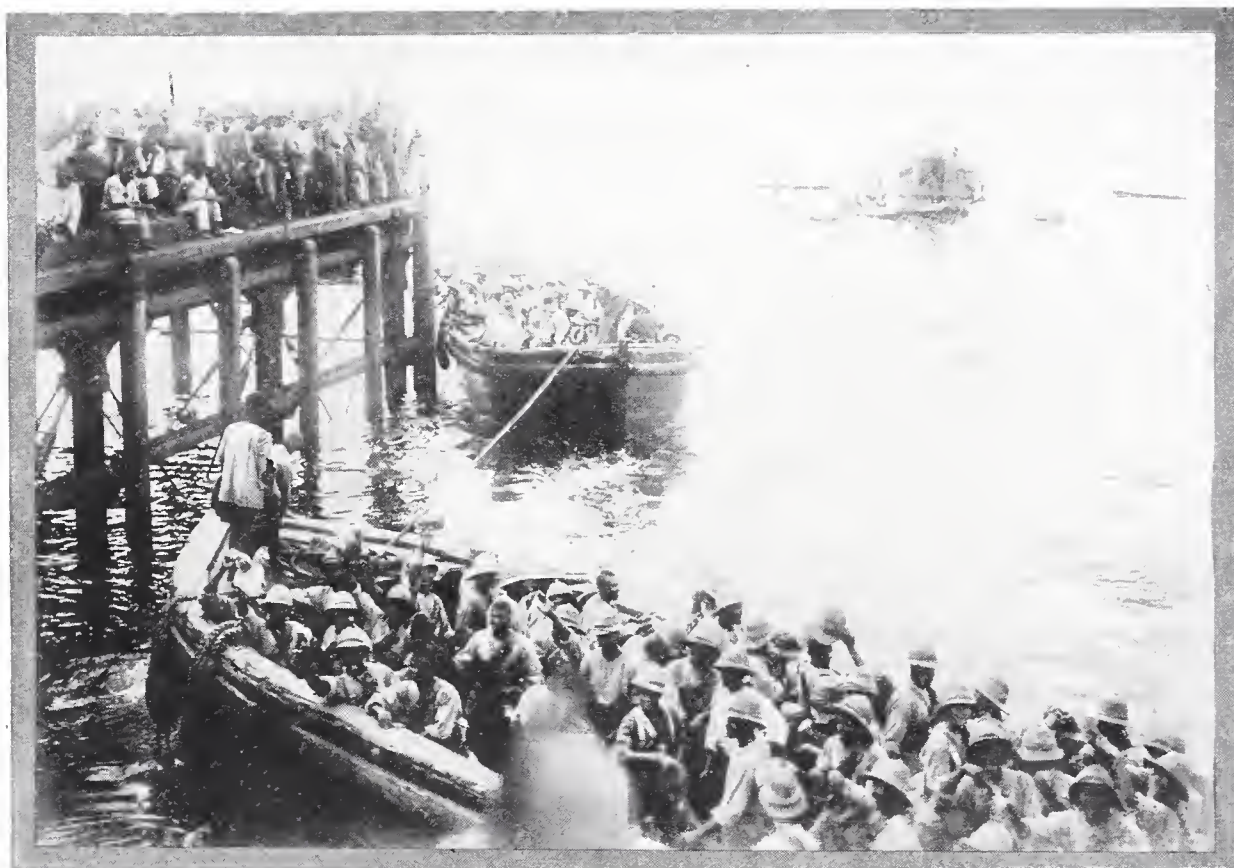
November 9, 1915, a detachment of 42 men of the "British West Indies Regiment," under Major Golding and Captain Cavanaugh, took its place in the procession. The weather was typical of the British climate in November, with hours of drenching rain: but, seriously as this might have marred a more theatrical spectacle, it had little effect on that businesslike pageant of war—the long roll of the forces of the Empire unwinding itself like a ribbon of khaki and steel, jointed with guns, down the length of the wet, grey London streets. Nor did the weather seemingly damp the ardour of Londoners, who flocked in their usual numbers to witness the stern spectacle. Certainly it did not cool the warmth of the welcome which they gave to the new unit of our Imperial army. Every newspaper which published an account of the procession noted the fact that a very special cheer greeted the appearance of the small detachment of the British West Indies Regiment. And the pleasure of the occasion was reciprocal. "The dusky faces of the smiling West Indians made one forget that colour had ever been a racial barrier," said the *Daily Chronicle*; and the *Daily News* added: "All the civilized warriors of the world seemed to be represented here, and when the West Indians appeared—all huge and mighty men of valour, black as night, with their white teeth flashing—the picture reminded one of a scene from 'Salaambo.'"

Although the detachment thus honourably noticed numbered only 42, it included representatives of all the Colonies from which contingents had arrived up to that date, except the Leeward Islands. The men from that group had only just arrived in England after a tempestuous voyage and had not received their full kit.

The way in which the British West Indies Regiment had thus been evolved by the amalgamation of contingents from the different islands, including British Honduras and British Guiana, had one great advantage: that each contingent had been made a self-contained unit as far as possible with a view to separate service, and each contained its proper complement of cooks, bakers, blacksmiths, mechanics, motor-engineers, telephone-repairers, carpenters, shipwrights, cabinet-makers, tailors, shoemakers, engine-drivers, painters, stenographers, printers, etc., so that when the regiment was formed it was found to be unusually well-found in all respects.

While training at Seaford the men of the new regiment continued to win golden opinions from all the British officers and N.C.O.'s under whom they worked so willingly, and their general conduct was without reproach, while by the typically British criterion of sport they showed themselves well qualified to take their place among the representatives of the Empire. Not only did they gain an easy victory over an Australian team at cricket, but in sports open to all units of the Command they won the first place in all the three first flat races, although

will, and of the 1st Battalion alone no fewer than 39 officers and 202 N.C.O.'s and men passed through special courses at the Imperial School of Instruction at Zeitoun, many with distinction. Before midsummer the first three battalions advanced a step nearer to the actual work of war. They moved to the menaced Canal Zone, where, after a brief period of practical instruction, they took part in making new defences and forming the defence troops of the Canal. A month later the 3rd and the newly arrived 4th Battalions were ordered to



*[By courtesy of the Ministry of Information.]*

#### EMBARCATION OF THE SECOND BAHAMAS CONTINGENT, B.W.I. REGIMENT.

many well known runners of the British Army were among the competitors.

Even greater success in the amenities of military life had attended those men of the British West Indies Regiment whom fortune sent early to Egypt, where, amid climatic conditions far less trying than an English spring to tropical constitutions, the first three battalions arrived in January, February and March, 1916, and straightway united themselves by the bonds of good comradeship and sport with the Australians, New Zealanders and men from all parts of the Empire already gathered together there. In the following August the 4th and 5th (Reserve) Battalions followed. All alike on arrival set themselves to the serious work of military training with zest and good-

sail for France, while the 5th was stationed at Alexandria as the feeding and reserve battalions of the 1st and 2nd. These, too, had new calls made upon them, sending 500 officers and men to East Africa, and, almost immediately afterwards, a force of 100 men to Mesopotamia. From December, 1916, the 1st and 2nd Battalions, replenished with men from the 5th, took part in the general movement of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force towards Palestine, gradually advancing across the desert, the 1st Battalion close behind the actual front, and the 2nd holding important posts on the lines of communication. Thus they had the satisfaction of knowing that they had not come so far and devoted themselves for twelve months with so much



zeal to their military training in vain. Already, alongside British and Indian troops, West Indians were taking their share in defending the Empire on three fronts, although, during 1916, the actual hostilities in which they engaged were limited to being bombed by enemy airmen, an experience after which they were complimented by the General on their coolness, and on another occasion engaging other hostile aviators who had landed behind our lines for the purpose of destroying the railway, but barely escaped from a British West Indian patrol, leaving their explosives behind them. In addition many of the West Indians, who had been mechanics, electricians, etc., in civil life, were attached to the Royal Engineers; and one of the armoured trains found almost its entire personnel—officers, N.C.O.'s and men—from the 1st Battalion; and with it all, in whatever they did, their fine physique, their smartness, and their goodwill became the recognized characteristics of the West Indians.

In the beginning of 1917 the chief part of the history of the British West Indies Regiment, which soon received its baptism of fire at the front, becomes merged in that of the Ex-

peditionary Force under General Allenby, illuminated by occasional mention in dispatches, and especial gratification was given to the loyal population in the Far Atlantic by the following telegram sent by the General to Sir William Manning, Governor of Jamaica:

I have great pleasure in informing you of the gallant conduct of the machine-gun section of the 1st British West Indies Regiment during two successful raids on the Turkish trenches. All ranks behaved with great gallantry under heavy rifle and shell fire and contributed in no small measure to the success of the operations.

This telegram, repeated to the Governors of the Bahamas and British Honduras, the latter of which is not politically part of the West Indies, although linked to them by service in the regiment, caused general rejoicing throughout the islands and helped, as in so many countless other little ways this great war helped, to unite together distant parts of the Empire in a closer bond of unity than was possible in times of peace. Then priority had naturally been given in each island to its separate interests, often conflicting with those of its neighbours, and always clouded with suspicions of neglect from the Government in England; but the German challenge proved a magic healer of all local symptoms of irri-



WEST INDIAN LABOUR CORPS TRAINING IN ENGLAND.



WEST INDIANS TRAINING FOR HOUSEHOLD WORK IN THE CAMPS.

tation, and no sentiment has more lasting power for union than the consciousness of good service in the common cause faithfully rendered and gratefully recorded.

It was, however, to none of the islands but to British Guiana, that undeveloped El Dorado of the Empire on the mainland of South America, that the sequel of distinction fell for the incident which earned General Allenby's special praise, in the Military Medal awarded to Lance Corporal T. N. Alexander "for exceptional coolness and devotion to duty" on two occasions, when he kept his gun working under heavy shell fire by high explosive and shrapnel, which blew away the flash blind and knocked down the flash screen.

Very soon after another Military Medal fell to the regiment in the person of Private J. Walker, of the 7th Battalion—like other corps, the West India contingent was ceaselessly multiplying its battalions to make use of the stream of drafts that were constantly arriving whenever transport had been found for them. His exploit was of the class which calls perhaps for more cool courage than any other—namely, remaining on an ignited ammunition dump after others had left in order to prevent an

explosion by removing boxes, which had caught fire, and live rounds, charges of which were ignited. "By his prompt action," says the official record, "serious loss of life and ammunition was averted."

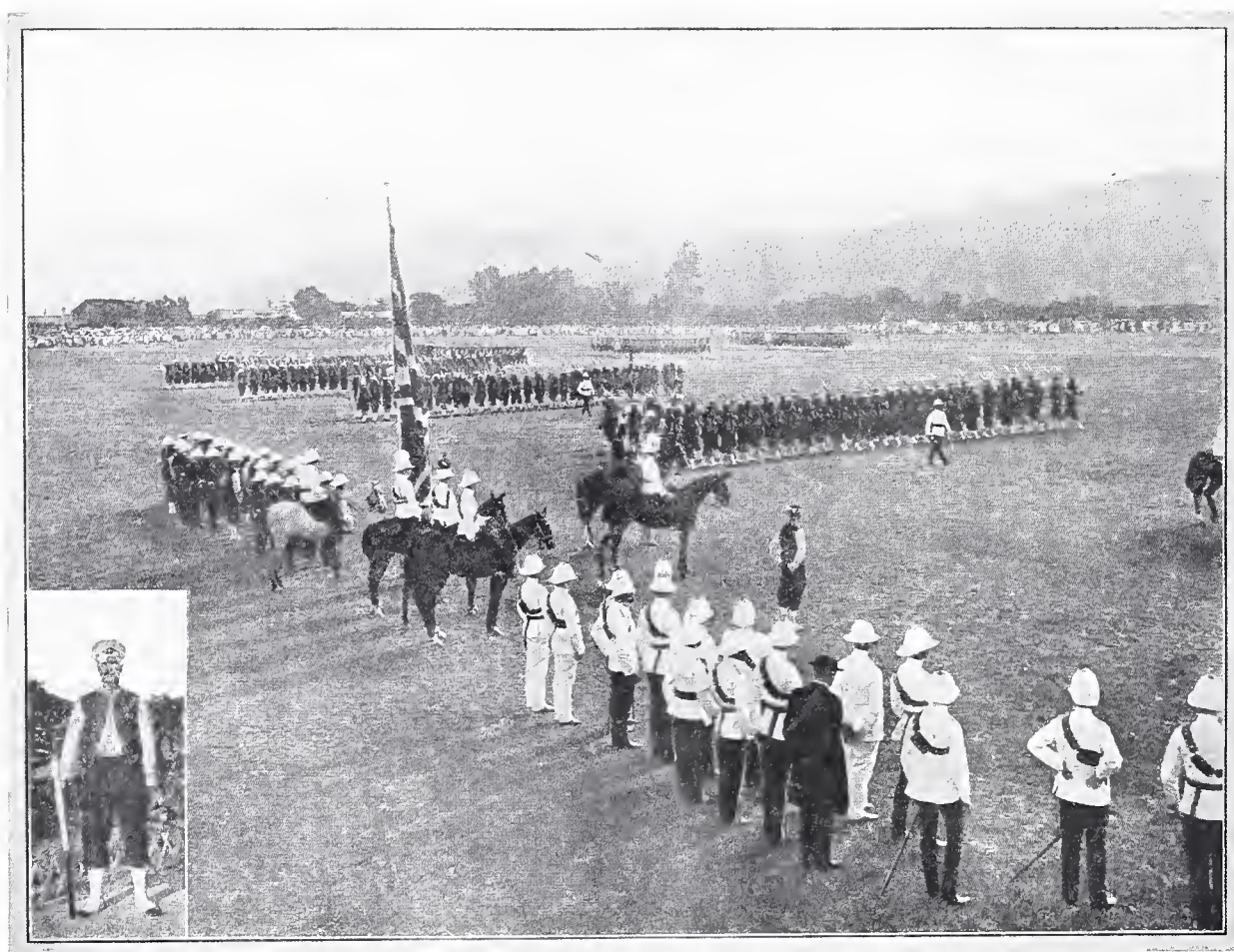
These, of course, were only individual cases, because a list published in October, 1917, of awards in the 3rd, 4th and 7th Battalions alone gave two Military Crosses (Captain R. H. L. Fink and 2nd Lieutenant A. A. Dunlop) and sixteen military medals. In addition Private Walker, mentioned above, appears again as the recipient of a bar and the grade of corporal.

Both the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the British West Indian Regiment occupied positions in the firing line in the successful advance into Palestine, which resulted in the capture of Jerusalem. Indeed, it was only the rugged nature of the last few miles of the ground over which they fought their way, and the stubborn resistance which the Turks were enabled to offer, that prevented these battalions and the British corps which they accompanied from participating in the actual taking of the sacred city. Previous to the advance the battalions had been in the trenches for some weeks, and had their full share of patrol



encounters and rather more than their share of shell fire. Their dug-outs, however, were so good that they had comparatively few casualties, although on one occasion two men were killed and two wounded by the same shell. Subsequently the commanding officer received from Lieut.-General Sir Philip Chetwode an autograph letter of thanks for the splendid work done by the British West Indies Regiment in Palestine—work which, he wrote, “has contributed in no slight degree to the magnificent success of General Allenby’s Army, who have

of State for the Colonies had only praise to bestow upon them all. Although employed chiefly in ammunition duties, for which their conspicuously fine physique made them pre-eminently suitable, and also on light railways and roads in forward areas, their work lay almost continuously under shell fire. “In spite of casualties,” Sir Douglas Haig reported, “the men have always shown themselves willing and cheerful workers,” and he noted also that these qualities had been “much appreciated by the units to which they have



AN INSPECTION OF THE WEST INDIA REGIMENT AT UP PARK CAMP, JAMAICA.

Inset: A sergeant of the regiment (not to be confounded with the new British West Indies Regiment.)

driven the enemy headlong to the north, with the loss of many thousands of prisoners and many guns.”

The Western front had always from the beginning of the war been the sphere in which military ambition had most desired employment and distinction, and in spite of the hardships of climate the West Indians here showed themselves consistently capable of realizing it. The two battalions which, as recorded above, were originally sent to the West increased to seven during 1917, and at the close of the year Sir Douglas Haig in his report to the Secretary

been attached and for whom they have been working.” As all who have experience of the conditions of active service know, it is even more important that troops engaged in subsidiary work should please the units for which they work than that they should please the general: for the good comradeship induced by cheerful and willing help removes all the causes of friction at their source, and the human machine then works smoothly in all its parts and achieves results for which we are too apt to give all the applause to the combatant ranks only. When, after one of our naval “scraps,”



the crew of a ship elected one of the stokers to receive their representative distinction they expressed a truer appreciation of the factors which make up success in war; and all who understand war will see higher praise in the Commander-in-Chief's reference to the appreciation of the West Indians by the British troops than in his own commendation of their "exceptional physique," "excellent discipline," and "high moral." The report continued:—"They have rendered valuable services at times of

nothing else in particular to do, no one recognizes the value of good work done cheerfully better than the soldier: and the ready expansive smile of the West Indians opened a short cut to his affection based upon the esteem which he could not help feeling for a black man who, as an artillery officer told Sir William Manning, "could handle five tons of ammunition where a white man could move three." This, of course, was the natural corollary of the splendid physique—"big men all," "giants all of them," "all huge and mighty men of valour," as three London dailies described their appearance in the Lord Mayor's Show—which is always the second impression that the observer of the West Indian gets, the first being the chronic good humour broadly stamped upon his smiling face.

Never perhaps had the collective good humour of men been put to severer tests than in this war. Chances of error and mishap that should



THE B.W.I. REGIMENTAL BADGE.

great pressure and have been of the utmost assistance to the siege artillery of the Armies. Since they have arrived these units have been employed in all the main operations that have taken place, including the battles of the Somme, Arras, Messines and the operations near Ypres this year." Thus was far more than justified the persistent loyalty of the Islands, which refused to take the Government's "No" for an answer, but went on recruiting with cheerful vigour in the hope that their men might at least be found worthy to do "garrison duty in England."

The foregoing conclusions were evidently present to the mind of Sir William Manning, Governor of Jamaica, when he visited the Western front at the close of 1917: for he stated at a meeting of the West India Contingent Committee, the organizing centre in London of the whole undertaking from the outset, that he had found the men "behaving extraordinarily well and excellent friends with the British soldiers." In spite of the latter's own pastime of "grousing" when he has



BUGLER OF THE REGIMENT.

have been preventible are always multiplied by the complexity and extent of an operation; and never before in the world's history had human beings been called upon to organize and execute an operation approaching in vastness and complexity the conduct of this world-wide war by the heterogeneous forces, in men, money, and material, of the scattered British Empire. No rudiments of the machinery for such an operation had pre-existed: and however perfect the machinery might have been, at each of its innumerable joints the human factor, always liable to error, must stand. In view of these circumstances of unprecedented difficulty the impartial verdict of the historian should pro-





WEST INDIA REGIMENT.

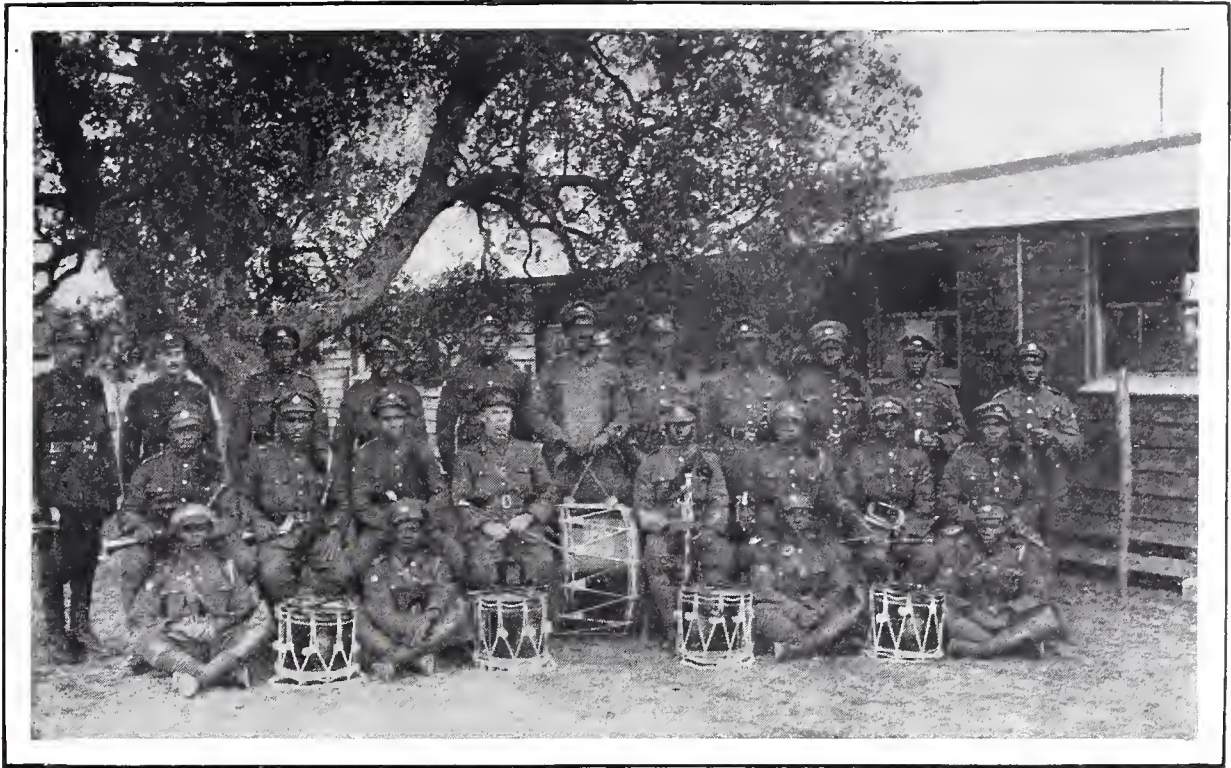
bably be that disastrous errors were remarkably few: because the greatest of all essentials to success, the will to win in a good cause, was present throughout. Nevertheless, disastrous errors undoubtedly occurred, and the story of the West India Contingent would not be complete without the admission. Taking the narrative of the 4th Battalion, for instance, recipient of exactly one-half of the Military Medals in the list referred to above, anyone who lightly esteems the unvarying cheerfulness with which the men performed their arduous and perilous work in France, should visit Bermuda. There he would find, conspicuous among the monuments of that lovely island, a memorial erected to the memory of a long roll of men of the 4th Battalion of the British West Indies Regiment who died of frost-bite and pneumonia, not in the ordinary course of hardship suffered on the Western front—this, in spite of their tropical constitutions, we might have expected their characteristic goodwill to have enabled their fellow-countrymen to condone—but during an entirely unnecessary voyage which the transport conveying them from Jamaica took to Halifax in Canada. The weather was arctic, the vessel was not warmed,

and the men were inadequately provided with warm clothes. The result was that, beside the number to whose loss the Bermuda memorial testifies, over 200 men were incapacitated—a miserable set-back to the enthusiasm with which they had started from their sunny homes to work and drill and risk their lives against the Empire's enemies. And because it was not accepted as a set-back—because Bermuda and all the other islands continued to offer their best in men, money and material with both hands and their whole heart—we may speak indeed of the characteristic goodwill of the West Indian. Deplorable errors must have occurred, as has been said, when so vast and complex a machine as the British Empire went to war, having been constructed only for peace; but it is something to know that the material which it had to work upon was so sound that



BRITISH WEST INDIES REGIMENT.





BAND OF THE BRITISH WEST INDIES REGIMENT.

even errors so deplorable as the foregoing could not permanently affect the characteristic goodwill of service rendered. Nay, it can truly be said that, so far as the British people at home were concerned, this particular instance of error would scarcely, if at all, been heard of, but for the goodwill which it failed to impair: for the only reference to it in the British Press appears to have been the following:—

The Battalion of the British West Indies Regiment, which had an unpleasant experience through the troopship in which it was being transported being diverted to Canada in arctic weather, has forwarded £40 through the West India Committee towards the Halifax fund as a mark of appreciation of kindness shown to all ranks by the people of that city.

Thus once more we see how the parallel of good being wrought to the Empire even through the unparalleled disaster of this great war worked out in such minor details as the strengthened good will between Halifax in Canada and Bermuda in its Atlantic solitude through the bitter experience of the 4th Battalion of the British West Indies Regiment. Such instances tell us, too, how much of suffering cheerfully borne was never recorded in the contemporary Press, nor finds a place in the larger annals of historic achievement, but should nevertheless be present to our minds, when we read such legends as that inscribed on the Shield of Honour presented by Princess Alexander of Teck on behalf of the women and children of the British Isles:—

TO THE  
SOLDIERS OF THE  
BRITISH WEST INDIES REGIMENT  
WHO HAVE FOUGHT IN THE CAUSE OF THE  
EMPIRE DURING THE GREAT WAR,  
FROM THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF THE  
BRITISH ISLES IN HIGH ADMIRATION OF THEIR  
VALOUR AND DEVOTION.  
PRESENTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE  
LEAGUE OF THE EMPIRE.

This inscription, with a laurel wreath and the badge of the regiment in the centre, is engraved upon a shield of white metal; and, together with a silken Union Jack, it was presented to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in May, 1917, for safe keeping. Similar shields and flags were presented at the same time for other Colonial units.

And in turning to consider the achievements of these other units in the Great War we are confronted once more by the impossibility of noting them all in detail or classifying them in any satisfactory order. It was to illustrate this difficulty that we selected one unit, the British West Indies, only and showed how the number and variety of its component items defied such classification; and it would not be feasible to attempt a similar brief analysis of other units. It must suffice, therefore, if the different remaining units or groups of units are passed more rapidly in review, on the understanding that each individual case would, if separately examined, justify the same pride in





ST. GEORGE'S HARBOUR, GRENADA.

our common citizenship of the British Empire that the example of the West Indies teaches.

Taking, for instance, the Pacific Islands—under which title, as previously stated, no fewer than seven distinct and separate groups of islands, with an eighth group made up of “miscellaneous islands,” were officially brought together—we find that the same bewildering variety of natural environment and material development produced no difference whatever in the attitude of settlers and natives alike. Readiness to sacrifice themselves to the last man and to give the last coin in their possession was the universal keynote of the loyal chorus that rang from end to end of the Pacific, as we have heard it in the Atlantic. In most of the islands there were practically only two classes of population—white officials and black natives, and it would not be possible to indicate any shade of distinction between the loyalty exhibited by them respectively. Official statements made in the earlier stages of the war that the “whole body of younger civil servants of the Western Pacific Islands have come over” to join the Army at home, and that “the whole native population volunteered to come and fight in any capacity” were equally true of all the islands: and many South Sea Islanders, finding no immediate outlet for their eagerness provided from England, turned towards New Zealand and managed to become attached to the forces which that dominion was raising

from the natives of its own Cook Islands, Rarotonga and Niue.

It is not easy for civilized and educated Europeans, unacquainted with the conditions of these distant islands, to realize the stages of thought by which the native finally reached the same level of enthusiasm as they stood upon. They had understood the issues involved from the outset: they had watched the storm gathering, and they had seen it burst. Their minds were made up and ready. With the native of a Pacific island it was as different as his sunlit landscape fringed with palm trees and the blue sea shimmering beyond was from the grey solidity of Fleet Street; and we cannot do better than quote the following masterly summary of the situation, as it appeared in the first year of the war to the native of the Pacific, from a contemporary official report on the Gilbert and Ellice Islands:

#### ATTITUDE OF NATIVES TOWARDS THE WAR.

In the early days of the War the attitude of the native towards the War was one of stupefaction.

War was for the men of their race in the old days, and it was this pleasant pastime which relieved the monotony of life and kept for them the superiority of the sex which the white men had put down as an evil to be eradicated. The Missions had first preached of the sin of war; later the British Government, and the German rule of the neighbouring Marshall Group, had sternly repressed any symptom of unrest, which is as natural to native races as the growth from childhood to manhood. That these two great white races whose wisdom had caused wars to cease should be “visiting each other's Islands and driving home the spear” made



them more human and less far removed as beings of a superior order. That the fight should extend beyond the customary three days was not surprising since the white man's Islands were large and their steam war vessels of unknown power.

As months went by it was gradually realized that this was war of an unknown kind, that the shedding of a little blood would not bring a further spell of peace. Gradually the "wise old men" came to grasp something of the depth of the issue involved, and ceased to tell of their own exploits. Then it was rumoured that native races were being allowed to take their place with British troops, and the Islands volunteered to a man. When it was learnt that their services could not be accepted, but that they might be permitted to contribute towards

contribution was eventually raised to 10s. each, the limit permitted, great disappointment was expressed, and it is known that many of these labourers—who come to Ocean Island purely for the money which they can save—gave a portion of this deferred pay to the patriotic funds of their various Islands after their term of indenture was completed.

Incidentally the foregoing explains one of the few paragraphs which appeared in the restricted British Press concerning these islands during the war, to the effect that the natives of Gilbert Island who had been em-



GRENADA: CROWD WAITING TO BID FAREWELL TO DEPARTING TROOPS.

war relief funds, they were again profoundly surprised. That the Missions should ask for their money they quite understood, that the Government demanded a yearly tax was in accordance with their own custom of tribute to Chiefs before the hoisting of the flag, but that money should be needed for the Government, or for white men outside Missions, was another shock to be taken into this readjustment of the mental focus.

Carefully it was explained that the money was not for the conduct of the War, that money for this purpose was raised, where necessary, by demand and not by voluntary effort, but that many men had to die, and that women and children must continue to live not wholly as a burden on the Empire. Once realized the reply was spontaneous. The natives of Ocean Island asked leave to give all their phosphate royalty to patriotic funds and were with difficulty persuaded to limit their gift to £1,000 by the warning of possible future droughts. At a meeting of the labourers of the Pacific Phosphate Company held at Ocean Island, by request of the Gilbert and Ellice employees, it was suggested that each man should give 5s. from his deferred pay. The immediate answer was "we want to give all our deferred pay" (amounting to about £15 a head). When the

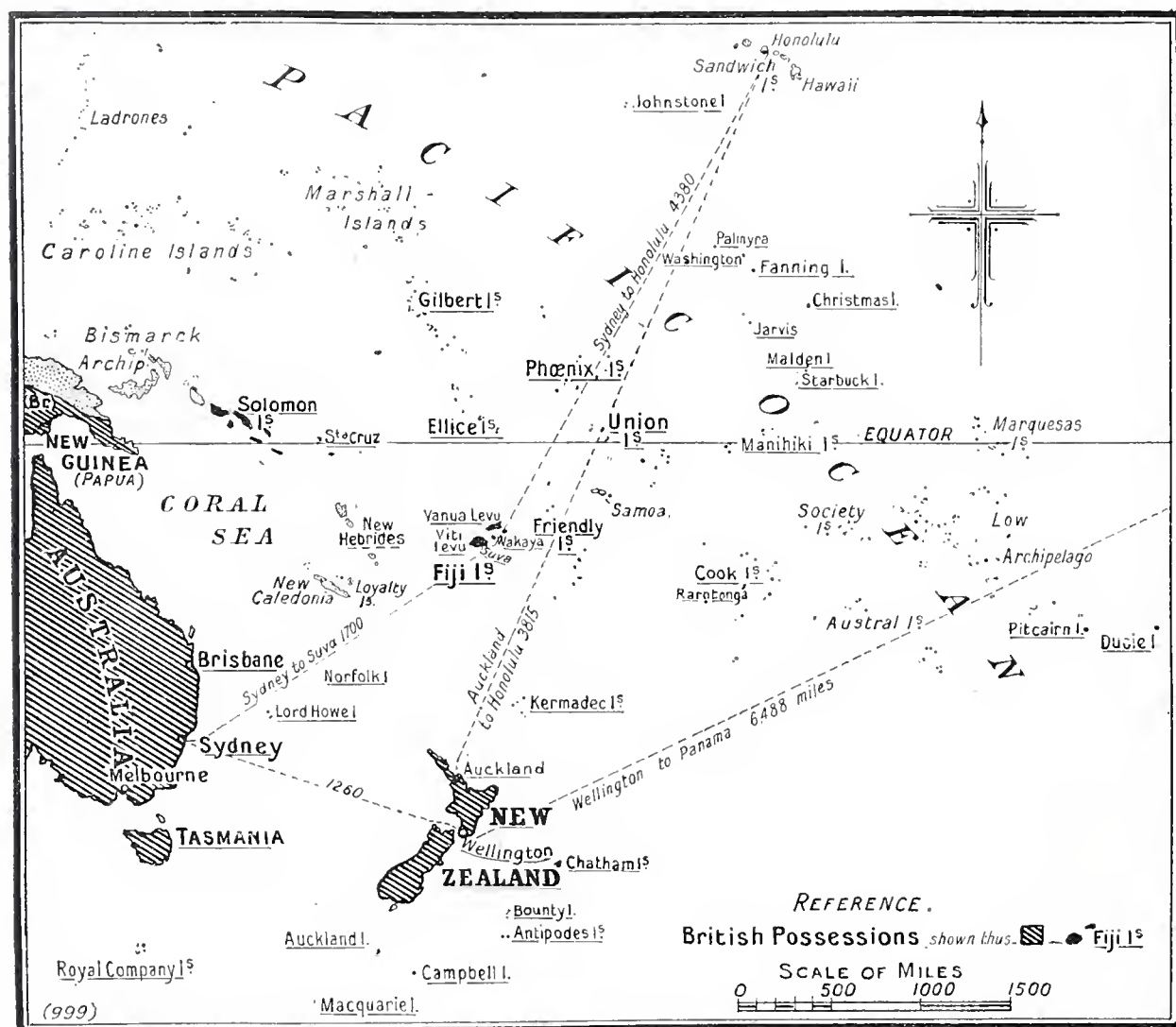
ployed on Fanning Island had given three sums of £6 10s. 6d., £2 3s., and £6 6s. 6d. respectively out of the pay thus earned. These sums were duly recorded in a Treasury Minute, but the significance of the record naturally escaped the English reader. It meant that these men of one set of islands, where they were not allowed to give more than 10s. each, had taken advantage of the receipt of pay for work done in another island to give that also, behind the back, as it were, of their own authorities. Trivial as the amount concerned may have been, it may be doubted whether any incident of the war was more deeply eloquent of the Empire's spirit.

To the Fiji and other islands in the Western Pacific must always be given a high place in



the Empire list of willing helpers, not because their help was so important as decisively to affect the issue of the war, but because they, the most remote of the British Crown Colonies and Protectorates—situated exactly where the Eastern and Western hemispheres unite—did at least as much as any of the others: which means that they did a great deal more even than those who knew the islands best

of about 150,000, with East Indians numbering about 50,000, and 4,000 whites, understood this primary necessity better than might have been supposed. Englishmen at home were accustomed to speak of "Fiji" just as they spoke of the Isle of Wight or of "Jamaica," meaning the West Indies, as though it were a single self-contained unit. But this "Fiji" meant nearly 250 separate islands, although two



### THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

thought possible. It had not occurred to anyone that the realities of the great issue could have burned so deeply into the hearts of these simple islanders. For the first six months or so the taking over of Samoa, by a force from New Zealand with which a good many men from Fiji went, and, as touching them still more nearly, the necessity of organizing serious "Home Defence" against the German raiders—Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Dresden and Nürnberg—which for a time infested the Pacific, absorbed all the energies of the Fijians. Even the natives, who constituted nearly two-thirds of the population

of them—as their names Viti Levu, or "Great Fiji" and Vanua Levu, or "Great Land," implied—were very much larger than the others, being roughly comparable in size to Jamaica and Trinidad, or half of Wales and Lancashire respectively: and men who were thus familiar with other related communities separated from them by the sea-highway of merchant vessels and warships had learned to "think Imperially" in an unconscious way that the great crisis woke to action, when Australian men-of-war and the French cruiser Montcalm escorting the transports bearing the New Zealand expeditionary force for the



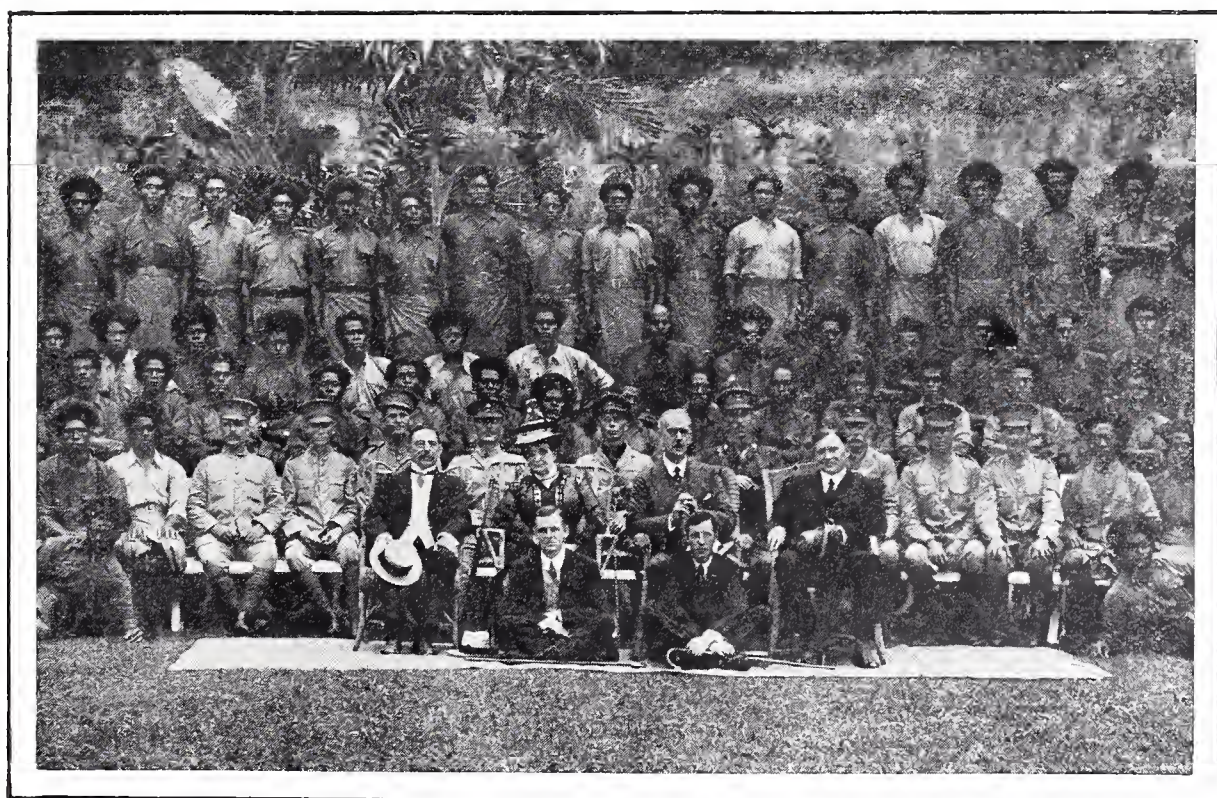


[Ellis &amp; Fry.]

## THE FIJI PLATOON OF THE KING'S ROYAL RIFLES.

attack on Samoa, steamed into Suva Bay. So, as soon as home needs had been attended to, all energy was turned to sending to Britain a stream of men, money and supplies; and this stream was continuous, until experienced British officials, who at first regarded the effort with pride only, began to fear that the islands must have depleted themselves to a dangerous extent. But, for the same reason which induced the Home Government to allow

many other overseas communities to undertake for the war financial burdens which would have been vetoed as imprudent in peace, it seemed the wisest policy in this emergency without precedent to impose no check upon loyal enthusiasm. In addition to all the other outlets for their generosity, it may be noted that two of the native provinces of their own initiative raised successful special funds for the purchase of aeroplanes.



## FIJIAN LABOUR DETACHMENT READY TO PROCEED TO FRANCE.

Seated on chairs, left to right: Hon. H. Marks, Lady Sweet-Escott, the Governor (Sir E. B. Sweet-Escott), and the Hon. J. McOwan, Inspector-General of Constabulary. Seated on the ground: Mr. G. V. Maxwell (Acting Secretary for Native Affairs), Mr. G. H. Roberts (Private Secretary).



In January, 1915, the "First Fiji Contingent" was sent home, numbering 60 white men, all but six of whom were immediately attached to the King's Royal Rifles, the famous "60th." These few representatives of the islands did splendid work at Ypres in the following May—as the two or three surviving British officers who were with them in that fierce fighting loved to tell. They had suffered terrible casualties in proportion to their numbers; but this only led to Fiji sending more and more men, the greater number of whom were always drafted into the 60th to fill "the platoon," with such

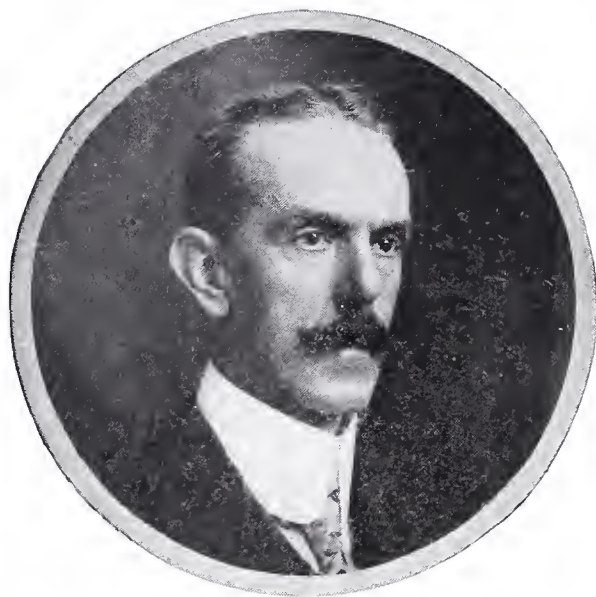


**THREE NATIVE FIJIAN CHIEFS**  
Serving with the Fijian Labour Corps.

excellent results that the name "Fiji" has been written for ever on the records of that splendid old regiment. Other Europeans from Fiji, who for one reason or another did not pass into the ranks of the 60th, performed as good service, though naturally less noted, with the R.E., R.F.A., and many other units, and a few in the Navy.

The above-mentioned were all Europeans, but the natives of the islands were equally eager to give service. One, a high Fijian chief, happened to be at Oxford when the war broke out, probably the only one of his race in

England at the time, and after vainly offering himself in all sorts of directions he got across to France, joined the Foreign Legion and did excellent service with that most cosmopolitan of forces. For a time there were similar obstructions in the way of utilizing the services



**SIR E. B. SWEET-ESCOTT, K.C.M.G.,**  
Governor of Fiji and High Commissioner for the  
Western Pacific.

of natives from the Islands, but there was even greater difficulty in keeping them back from going "home" to England to serve. Eventually the obstructions were overcome, and in the subsequent years of war there were as large numbers, proportionately to the population of the places from which they came, of Pacific Islanders serving on the various fronts under different circumstances as from any other part of the Empire. This was equally true of the whites and the natives. In the Fiji group the white inhabitants, scarcely 4,500 of men, women and children, sent at least 600 of their number to bear arms. Of the native Islanders it is difficult to estimate the number that were employed with the armies; but the fact that the Fijian Labour Company alone gave 100 of its men shows that the proportion who left the Islands was high; and those who had to remain equally "did their bit," in the phraseology of the time, by efficiently performing increased work in spite of reduced numbers and continuing to contribute money and goods to an extent which those who had previously known the Islands best would have thought utterly impossible. A Veterans' Corps was also formed of men over age for enlistment in England, and proved a highly efficient and reliable part of the Islands' Defence Force.

One personal incident may be quoted, as illustrating the quality of the material which came from overseas generally into the British Army. A young sub-inspector of plantations, who came over with the First Fijian Contingent in 1915, served for two years in the ranks of the King's Royal Rifles, won his commission in July, 1917, and his captaincy and the Military Medal at Cambrai in November. Soon after, his colonel being seriously wounded, he picked him up single-handed and was carrying him back when several other officers came to help. "Leave me alone to this 'Fiji Savage,'" cried the wounded colonel, "he is managing splendidly." A few months later this young ex-sub-inspector of plantations was second in command of his battalion of the K.R.R.'s. And this case was so far from exceptional that it might almost be called typical of the military careers of those young Britons who from office or plantation bungalows in the tropics and amid the oceans heard their country's call in those years of fate.

In conclusion, too, it may not seem trivial to notice the fact that the Fijian Native Labour Contingent became, like similar bodies of

natives from other lands, welcome entertainers to the British soldiers at off times in the campaigns with their characteristic songs and dances.

It was in connexion with Fiji, too, that a humorous but importantly successful ruse of war was recorded. At the time when a raid on the islands by German cruisers was imminent, the wireless station at Suva, Fiji's menaced capital, intercepted messages passing between two German cruisers evidently not more than 200 miles away. At that time the Australian squadron, powerful enough to make short work of the German raiders, was far away in the vicinity of Papua; but the Governor of Fiji rose to the occasion and the following "wireless" was promptly launched: "To Admiral, H.M.A.S. Australia. Thanks for message. Shall expect you to-morrow at daylight. Governor of Fiji." Nothing was seen of the German ships; but some time afterwards a letter written by an officer of the *Scharnhorst* was published in a South American paper, in which he stated that the raid on Suva which everyone on board had longed for was prevented by fear lest the Australian battleship *Australia*



FIJIANS LINED UP FOR REVIEW IN HONOLULU  
Before embarking for France, via Canada, to serve as stevedores on transports.



might come upon the scene. This incident deserves to become historie, but not so another humorous war story current at the same time in the same part of the world, to the effect that at the beginning of the war the King of Tonga (one of the group of the Friendly Isles to which collectively its name is often given) had solemnly proclaimed his neutrality: for this was a manifest *réchauffé* of the similar political exploit attributed to his Majesty's predecessor



"FIJIS" IN THE TRENCHES.

at the time of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. To the island of Wakaya in the Fiji group belonged the honour of having by means of its local constabulary effected the capture of Count Luekner, Captain of the German commerce-raider Seeadler, with a Lieutenant and four German sailors of the same vessel.

The foregoing details of Fiji's part in the Great War have been given because, although too brief to do justice to so interesting and picturesque a theme, the space at command in this history is too limited for details of almost any kind regarding each of the uncounted units of the Empire, scattered over the Pacific Ocean, which sent such aid as their differing circumstances permitted. Making allowance for these differences, the case of each is similar, and what has been said of Fiji may be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to all those many others of which lack of space forbids even the briefest separate mention. And unfortunately, but inevitably, the reverse side of the glorious shield of war—

the death and loss and suffering—must also be accepted as typical of all. Mention has been made above, for instance, of "the platoon" in reference to Fiji's connexion with the King's Royal Rifles, and to this extent these Islands may be accounted more fortunate than other dependencies whose contingents of European recruits for the British Army were swallowed up and lost to sight after recruitment in various regiments. The men from Fiji, going almost as one solid body to the 60th, were able to retain a collective individuality as "the Fiji platoon" and by the distinctive merit of their service to win honour for the Island, while at the same time remaining a central object to whose maintenance and encouragement the continuous efforts of the Fijians at home could be directed. What efforts were needed for this purpose is shown by the fact that this platoon, which distinguished itself at Ypres in May, 1915, lost so heavily on that occasion that it was deemed advisable to transfer the few survivors to the Salonika Force. Twice again, at the beginning and the end of 1916, the Fiji platoon in Flanders was replenished by contingents and again reduced by casualties as well as by the bestowal of commissions upon many of its surviving members. By degrees, however, men began to return to it from hospitals and its strength was restored at the end of 1917 for the fourth time by the attachment to it of the "2nd Fiji Reinforcements." Through all these vicissitudes of service the Commanding Officer of the 60th (K.R.R.C.), Lieut.-Col. H. W. M. Watson, D.S.O., had acquired so high an opinion of "the platoon" that whenever he had to select men for commissions he looked first to those wearing the "Fiji badge," and there was therefore some poetic justice in the fact that when he was wounded and buried by the accidental explosion of a trench-mortar it was a rifleman of the Fiji platoon who dug him out. But even the fourth replenishment did not last long. A number of the men were badly gassed by German shells in February, 1918, and about a fortnight later practically the whole platoon suffered the same casualty, having been billeted in a low ravine where the collected gas had sunk to the bottom, subsequently rising again when the sun reached it and overwhelming the men.

In the concluding incident this brief sketch of the career of the Fijians in the British Army was, of course, peculiar to this platoon, but there is no reason to suppose that on the whole the islanders were subjected to greater perils



and trials of war than fell to the lot of other colonial contingents. They have merely been selected as an illustrative type because the embodiment of most of them as a distinct platoon in an individual regiment enabled a consecutive record of their experiences to be maintained.

Of the numerous remaining units of Britain's island Empire which rallied to her aid from all the oceans, only the briefest mention is possible under the headings of the groups in which they were collected for official purposes; and as Nature had placed them in no geographical order, while their equality in effort forbids any order of merit, they are dealt with most conveniently perhaps in alphabetical order.

From Ascension Island, with its bare 15 acres of cultivated ground and its population of scarcely 100, exclusive of employees on the telegraph, nothing could have been expected; and as it was an Admiralty Station, with which published records have no concern, the good work which it achieved in the war must remain hidden among the thousand secrets of the Silent Service.

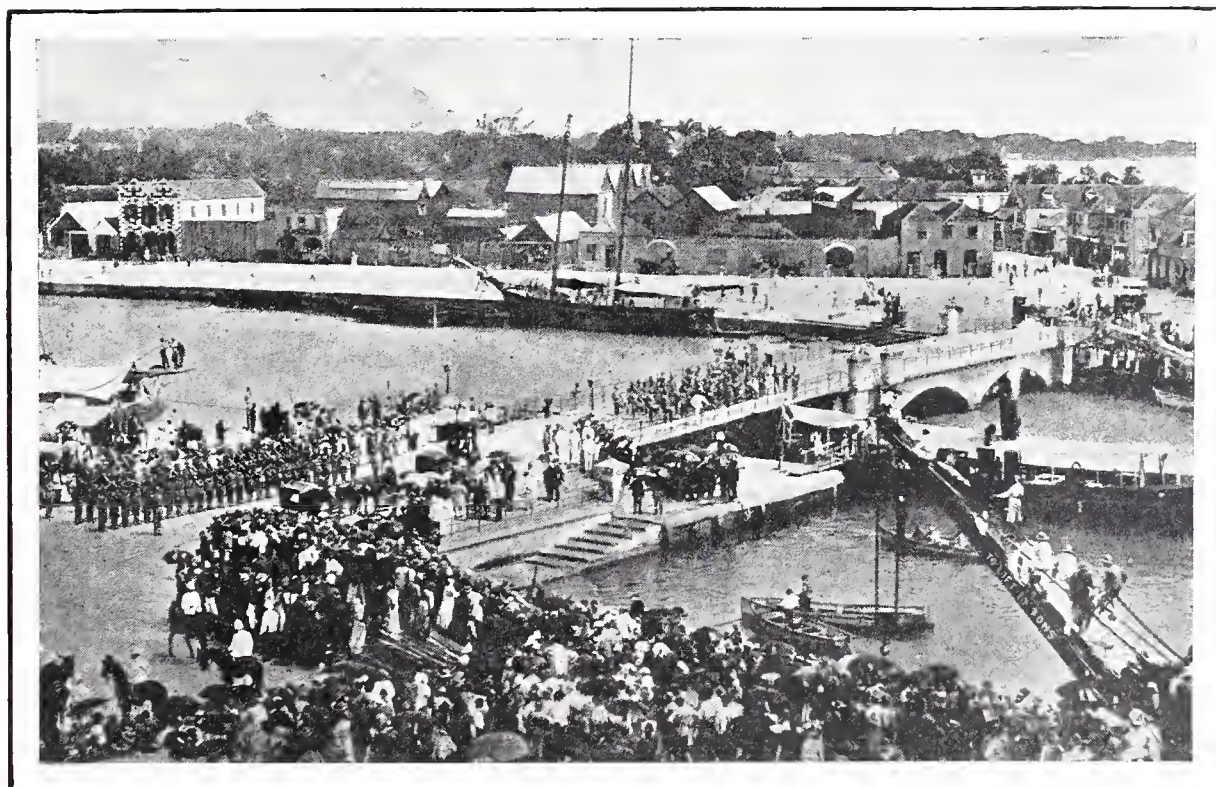
Taking the second unit on the official list, "Bermuda," like "Fiji," is the name given to a large number, about 100 in this case, of islands collectively known as the Bermudas, from the Spaniard Bermudez, who sighted them in 1527, although with any other people



**MOTOR AMBULANCE PROVIDED BY  
THE PEOPLE OF BARBADOS.**

Similar gifts were made by Trinidad and other Colonies.

than the British the later name of Somers Islands, after Sir George Somers, the British admiral who colonized them in 1609, would have prevailed. Of their total population of 20,000, fully one-third are white, exclusive of soldiers and sailors employed in the strongly fortified dockyard where the Atlantic squadron refits. Amid such associations it was natural that a high sense of patriotic duty should have animated the inhabitants; and in addition to contributions of money, one gift amounting to £40,000, Bermuda formed two white contingents for service with the British armies on the Western Front—the Bermuda Volunteer Rifle



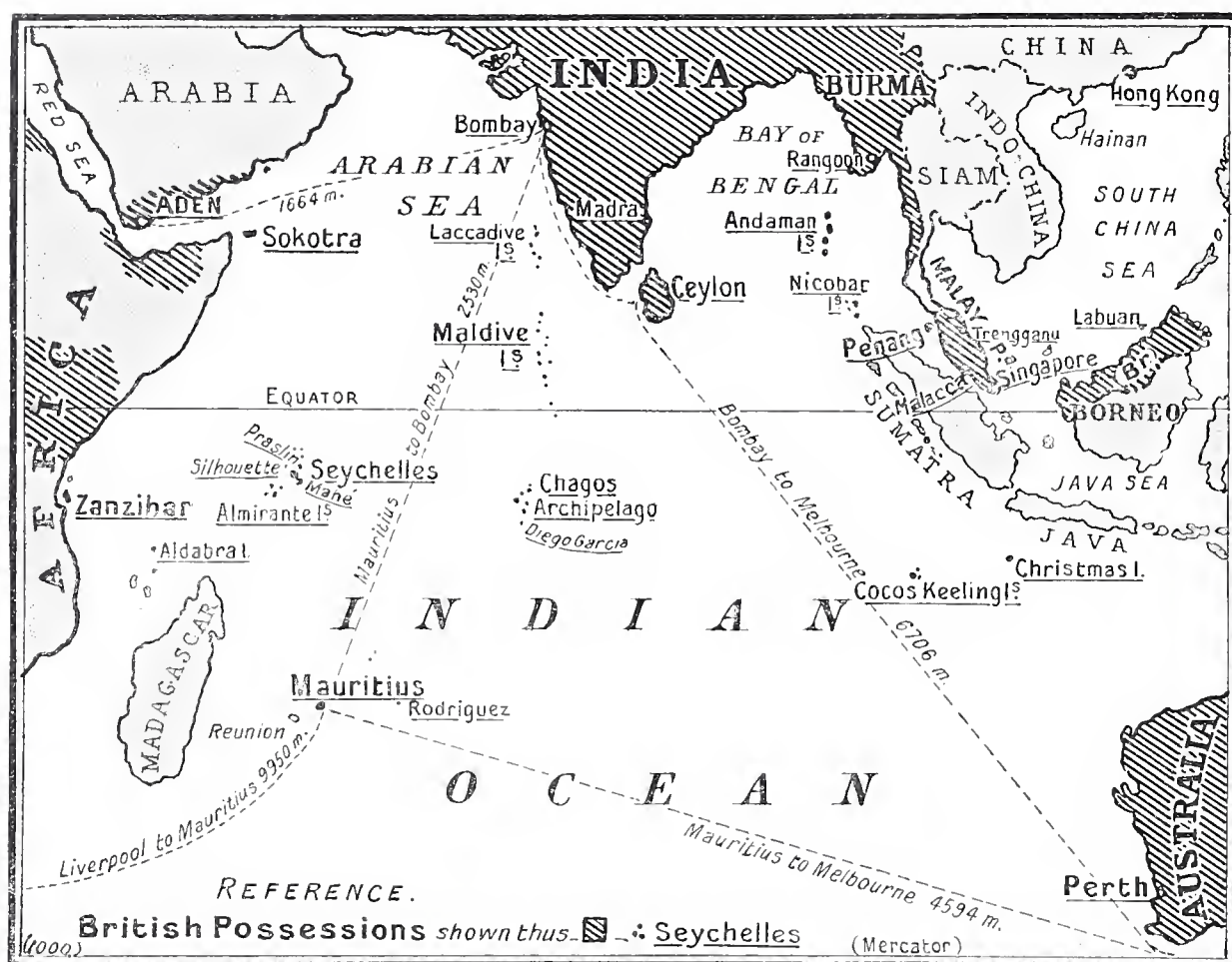
**DEPARTURE FOR EUROPE OF THE BARBADOS CONTINGENT FROM BRIDGETOWN.**



Corps, attached to the Lincolns, and the Bermuda Militia Artillery, attached to the Royal Garrison Artillery. Both of these valuable contingents saw much active service, and were heavily engaged with proportionate losses in the desperate battles of 1917. The black population were equally resolute in service and readily sank their individuality of origin in the British West Indies Regiment, although Bermuda did not belong to the West Indian Islands ordinarily so called: and mention has already been made of the memorial in

have passed before rising to the recognized rank of colony, being under the control of the British North Borneo Company. The service, therefore, rendered by Mahomedan settlers, Chinese traders and labourers or aboriginal Celebes, under the Company's auspices, finds its proper place in the records of work done by the great commercial organizations of the Empire.

In no part of the Empire did the call of the Mother Country meet a readier or more practical response than in Ceylon. Money was simply poured out by all classes with amazing



THE INDIAN OCEAN.

Bermuda which records the tragic experience of men of the 4th Battalion of that Regiment.

From the Far West of the Atlantic the next name carries us to the Far East of the Pacific; but British North Borneo—although at the outbreak of war it had already a standing force of 800 men under British officers with one machine-gun and a mountain battery—must be excluded from this survey of our Insular Colonies and Protectorates, because it is not a British island, being in fact part of the mainland of a large Dutch possession, and also because it was still, at the outbreak of war, in the pupal stage through which many British possessions

generosity, and, in addition, one million sterling was voted in 1915 and another million in 1917, the two votes amounting roughly to ten shillings per head of the total population, European and native, of the island. A law was also passed in 1917 to make volunteering compulsory for Europeans—one of the quaint contradictions in terms which the war brought about in many institutions—but long before this the island had been contributing worthily to the British Army. The Ceylon Planters' Rifle Corps enlisted practically *en bloc*; and a Ceylon Contingent, 350 strong, composed of Government servants, all whites, served with dis-



#### THE LANDING STAGE, HAMILTON, BERMUDA.

tion in Egypt and Palestine—and was specially attached to General Sir William Birdwood, who always spoke extremely highly of it. Like other contingents, however, it was ultimately extinguished, chiefly by casualties, but largely also by Imperial Commissions bestowed upon its members. Much the same fate, no doubt, befell the other white contingents from Ceylon, sent out by public-spirited committees of merchants and others, although the history of these could not be traced, as they were merged on enlistment in England in various British regiments. Indeed, when such a war lasts for years little can ever remain but the honoured name of any limited body of troops that was engaged in the earlier periods—like the schoolboy's knife which has had a new blade three times and a new handle twice, but is still fondly called the "same old knife." In addition to these fine bodies of European recruits, Ceylon contributed large numbers of natives to labour battalions, the Church and the missions in the island taking an active part in enlisting and dispatching them.

Next on the alphabetical list comes the island of Cyprus, whose position within the zone of operations in the Near East made its war record belong to the history of the Gallipoli campaign and the Salonika Forces; but one very noteworthy and useful contribution to the latter from the island's own resources was the recruitment of several thousand sturdy muleteers, splendidly adapted to transport work in the mountainous country where that force was located.

To the South Atlantic from the Levant is a long stride, but the Falkland Islands, which come next, were brought within the danger zone of the earlier years of war by the persistent activity of German cruisers, whose

doings and whose end have been recorded elsewhere. In the circumstances it was inevitable that the home defence of this cluster of about 100 islands, all with the exception of West Falkland and East Falkland very small in size, should have monopolized the energies of the limited but mainly British population, who promptly raised an efficient



[Elliott & Fry.]

GENERAL SIR JAMES WILLCOCKS, K.C.B.,  
Governor of Bermuda.

volunteer Regiment for garrison duty, although the fortunate destruction of Von Spee's squadron, recorded elsewhere, put an end to the desperate need which had existed for its services. In addition, the Colony contributed liberally, like all its fellows, to the expenses of the war; and subscription to the various War Funds came freely from its citizens.

The Colony of Gambia does not come into



our present category, because, although its chief settlement of Bathurst is situated upon the island, or rather the sandbank, of St. Mary, nearly all its territory lies on the banks of the river Gambia, and it is included, with the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria, in the mainland protectorate of British West Africa. Its generous contributions to war funds may, how-



**CAPTAIN SIR A. H. YOUNG, G.C.M.G.,**  
Governor of the Straits Settlements and High  
Commissioner for the Federated Malay States.

ever, be noted here, especially in the grant of £10,000 to the Prince of Wales' Fund and £10,000 for the purchase of aeroplanes.

Hong Kong brings us back to the Far East in the Pacific, and, like many other official designations of Crown Colonies, the name covers far more than the island of Hong Kong; for it includes a large number of other islands off the coast of south-eastern China, at the mouth of the Canton River, as well as portions of the mainland. Like the other eastern colonies, its native population was less suited to recruitment for combatant service than for the labour battalions, which it hastened to raise; but, like Ceylon, it passed an ordinance making volunteering for enlistment in the British Army compulsory upon all Europeans. Thus the colony contributed practically the whole of its available strength; and in the matter of money it raised at one time a loan of three million dollars for His Majesty's Government, and gave another two million dollars out of the treasury and current taxes. As from other colonies, too, a ceaseless stream of subscriptions to War Funds in England came from unofficial sources.

Except that it is an island, and an integral

part of the British Empire, the Isle of Man in this list might seem only a degree less out of place than, say, the Isle of Thanet; but among its other peculiar privileges Mona's Isle enjoyed the right to have it recorded—in the same Treasury minute that enumerated loyal gifts from the Gilbert Islanders and the men of Mauritius—that “the Tynwald Court of the Isle of Man voted £10,000 to war expenditure.”

The rôle of Malta, next on the list, was more than that of voluntary colonial helper. From the very commencement of the war the island hummed and throbbed with the military and naval energy transmitted through it, like a nerve-centre in some vast organism suddenly aroused to fight for life. So Malta played a strenuous part in forwarding and coordinating many details of more than one of the great campaigns which have been dealt with in other sections of this History. Nevertheless, behind the scenes of all this direct activity in the war lay the real Malta, unlike most official colonies almost a self-contained unit in herself; for the adjoining islands of Gozo and Comino, with its sanitary station, and other islets claim no separate consideration. And the real Malta did not forget that she was an island daughter of the island empire which had been forced to war. Almost from the very beginning Maltese labour battalions were doing splendid service. Gallipoli and Salonika knew well the lilting music of the swarthy gangs of broad-shouldered men who sang as tirelessly almost as they worked. Great numbers of willing Maltese labourers thronged, too, to the Imperial dockyards at Malta; many enlisted in the British Army and Mercantile Marine, and an entire extra battalion of Royal Malta Militia was quickly raised. If to the service decorations during the great war had been added a “Maltese Cross,” assuredly it would not have been undeserved, according to the reports alike of generals at the fronts and inspecting officers at home upon Malta's efforts.

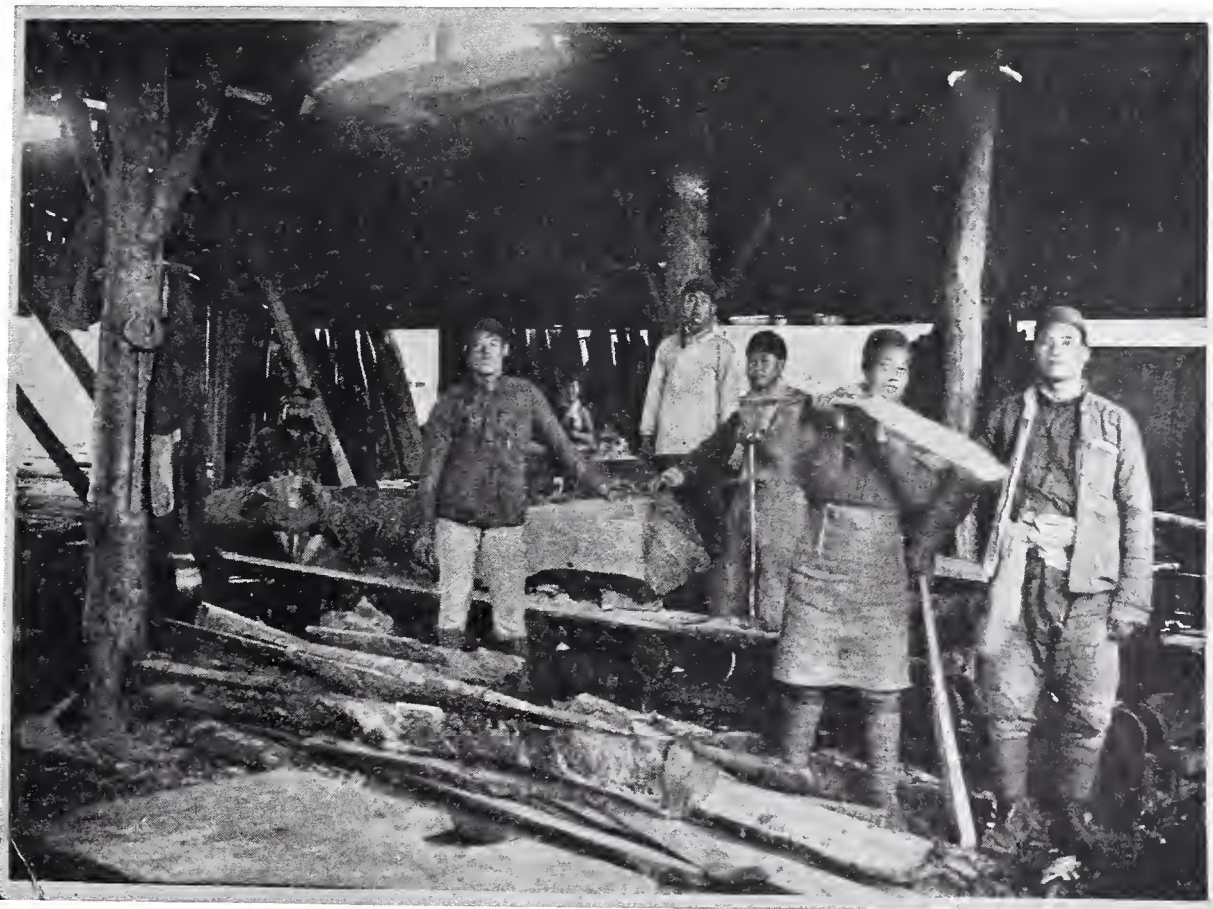
From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean the next name leads us, and the island of Mauritius—although her French laws and language still recall her century of political youth as the “Ile de France”—proved herself no unworthy member of the British family-circle that rings the globe. As with other colonies, the official title of Mauritius—originally given by the Dutch, after their Prince Maurice of Nassau, and preferred for

obvious reasons by the British when they took the Ile de France in the Napoleonic war but left its laws and language unchanged—covered not only the island itself but also the well-known Rodrigues, 350 miles away to the eastward, as well as many scattered groups of coral islands in the Indian Ocean, the chief among them being Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago, whose fine harbour made it an important coaling station on the direct line from the Red Sea to Australia. Important as it might be in this respect, however, Diego Garcia at the outbreak of war had scarcely 600 inhabitants, so that in considering the effort made by the colony of “Mauritius” attention might practically be limited to the island of that name. At the very outset the local Government ascertained the direction which the Colony’s help might take most usefully, and several Labour Corps, which subsequently did excellent service under difficult conditions in Mesopotamia, were quickly raised, and frequent later drafts were sent to maintain their strength. In money, too, Mauritius exhibited a generous spirit worthy of the occasion which had placed both her parents in history on the same side in a world-wide war, conspicuous among her con-

tributions being a local loan raised on the credit of the Colony, of which the entire proceeds were transferred to the King’s Government, and a free gift of one million rupees—£66,666 13s. 5d.—applied to the purchase of aeroplanes.

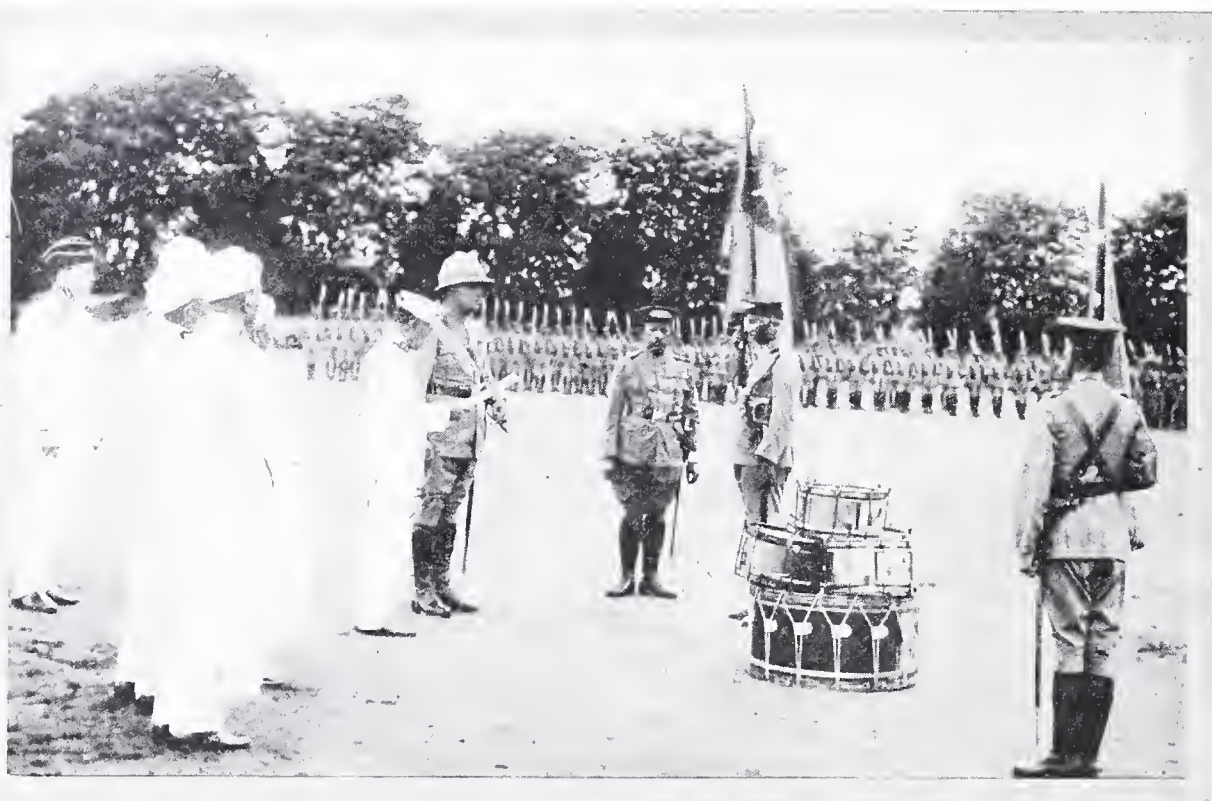
On the other side of the Indian Ocean, Papua in the island of New Guinea had its direct share in the war in connexion with the Imperial Australian Expedition which took possession of the German territory of King William’s Land in the north of the island in September, 1914; but this exploit, as well as the contributions of Papua for the war, belong to the records of the Australian Commonwealth.

Passing now to the wide solitude of the South Atlantic we find in St. Helena a unit of Britain’s island Empire which at the outbreak of war occupied a position that was unique in more than one respect. In the first place, its title as a Colony coincided with the fact that it was a single solitary island, its nearest neighbour, Ascension, being 760 miles to the north-west, and the nearest mainland, South America, no less than 1,800 miles away. Its isolation, coupled with its healthy climate, had specially fitted it for the part of an ocean prison, assigned to it twice in the previous century,



CHINESE LABOUR PARTY AT FORESTRY WORK ON THE WESTERN FRONT.





[By courtesy of the Ministry of Information.]

#### THE SULTAN OF JOHORE PRESENTING COLOURS TO NATIVE TROOPS.

for the confinement, first of Napoleon and long afterwards of the Boer prisoners from South Africa in 1900. It was significant of the world's changed conditions that in the Great War both the French and the Boers were fighting, as faithful allies or as loyal subjects, on the side of the Power that still held St. Helena. Significant it was, too, of the fact that Britain had not been planning war that the Imperial garrison of St. Helena had actually been withdrawn from St. Helena less than 10 years before the war broke out and had not been replaced. Because the Empire's face was turned towards peace, however, this had been natural enough: for the island had lost its former importance as well as most of its prosperity through the cutting of the Suez Canal. It was no longer the ocean landmark—if such a mixed metaphor is permissible—on the route to India, but was frequented only by a few homeward-bound sailing vessels on the return journey. Nevertheless, the most elementary survey of the conditions that might be brought about by war with Germany must always have included the blocking of the Suez Canal and the restoration to St. Helena of its pristine importance and its need of self-defence. It was natural, therefore, that all the energy and means of its small population of scarcely 3,500 should have been devoted,

when the war broke out, to raising a Volunteer regiment for garrison duty.

Returning to the Indian Ocean we next find the Seychelles, almost equidistant from Zanzibar on the west and Mauritius to the south, a group of no fewer than 90 islands which were taken from the French in the Napoleonic wars and made into a separate British Colony only 11 years before the outbreak of the Great War. The chief islands, all retaining the names of their old-time French connexion, were Mahé and Praslin, both famous as the sources of the double cocoanut, coco-de-mer, with Silhouette, Curieuse and La Digue, only one other island, Aldabra, being specially noteworthy, as the home of the giant land-tortoises. Rich as Seychelles might be in natural products, however, their total population was only about 23,000, mostly congregated in Mahé when the war broke out; and they were far from wealthy, having been in receipt of a grant-in-aid from the home Government only one year before. They did their best with enthusiasm, nevertheless, and succeeded in raising several Labour Corps, which did excellent service in the strenuous campaign in East Africa.

With the "Straits Settlements" in the Far East we approach the end of our list; and as the bulk of the territory of this Colonial unit

belonged to the mainland of Asia, it might even be excluded from consideration as part of the island Empire of Britain. But Singapore and Penang, the two chief towns in the Settlements, are both situated on islands off the Malay Peninsula, to the south and west respectively, while Labuan is also an island close to the coast of Borneo, and the Coeoe-Keeling Islands and Christmas Island lie away out in the Pacific, with the large Dutch island of Sumatra lying between them and their British headquarters of administration. Distances and obstacles, however, seemed only to have drawn closer the bonds of union between sundered islands when the war broke out, and in the collective efforts of the Straits Settlements no islanders and no residents on the mainland of the Malay Peninsula were unrepresented. As was everywhere the case, the results of those efforts were immense considering the tenuity of the resources and the undeveloped condition of many of the communities from which they came. Recognizing, as did all the Eastern colonies, that contributory labour rather than direct combatant service was the proper function of their peoples in that great crisis, the Straits Settlements—in addition, of course, to the European volunteers, whom, like all other colonial units, they sent freely for enlistment in the British

Army at home—bent all their energies to the recruitment of skilled labourers, very large numbers of whom were sent to Mesopotamia and did splendid service in that difficult campaign. In the matter of money the contributions of the Settlements were surpassingly generous. At the outset, for instance, £1,000,000 was voted, to be paid in five yearly instalments; then another million was promised; and, later, in 1917, again, a special war tax was instituted on income-tax lines, yielding £300,000 per annum towards the costs of the war. In addition the colony pledged its credit for a local loan of five millions and transferred the proceeds to the King's Government at 1 per cent. less interest than the Settlements themselves were paying. Although, too, the Federated Malay States under Straits Settlements' supervision belong to the mainland of Asia, it is appropriate here to notice their magnificent emulation of the colonial effort in a free gift of half a million to the King's Government, in addition to raising a local loan and transferring the proceeds to England, and also paying for the first-class battle-cruiser *Malaya*.

With this we end our very brief review of the loyal response of Britain's island colonies and protectorates to the Mother Country's call to arms; for Wei-hai-Wei, although



*By courtesy of the Ministry of Information.*

**MALAY STATES GUIDES ENTRAINING FOR ADEN.**



it included many islands in its bay, drew the bulk of the host of labourers which it contributed from China through its belt of territory on the mainland of Shantung; and Zanzibar, which gave successive large sums for the purchase of aeroplanes and raised efficient local forces for its own defence against the attacks which at one time were imminent from the Germans, falls officially under the heading of "British East and Central Africa," with Somaliland, the East Africa Protectorate, Uganda, and Nyasaland.

Sarawak has been omitted from this record, because, like British North Borneo, it is not an island itself but part only of the mainland of that large Dutch possession and because, in spite of the English name of its Raja Brooke, it is in fact a foreign State to which protection is accorded in exchange for control of its foreign policy. Tristan da Cunha, an isolated group of rocky islands at the opposite limit of the ocean world, is omitted also, because its solitary hundred of inhabitants, only visited at long intervals by a single ship, might scarcely have seemed to be living in the world that was at war. Perhaps they were wise, in spite of recurrent periods of distress, to resist the temptation of offers of land in South Africa; and possibly the longevity attributed to them had its attractions in their island prison, though others, who had felt the quick pulse of life and death throbbing in the crisis of two hemispheres, might envy them no more than they envy tortoises which may live to 300 years with contented intervals of six weeks between meals.

In estimating the significance of the foregoing record the factors to be borne in mind are the usually small proportion of Europeans to natives in the population of the islands and the variable fighting qualities of the latter, who were generally more suited for labour battalions than for combatant units. The climate of Europe, again, was a bar to many; and even the labour battalions went on this account chiefly to Mesopotamia and East Africa, so that little was heard of them on the Western front.

Striking contrasts are to be seen, no doubt, between the contributions that were received from different islands, alike in men, money, and materials, and it was by no means always those which were best known and most highly thought of that made the largest response to the Empire's call. There were always good and sufficient reasons, however, for such discrepancies. Each

island had its own set of circumstances to consider. Some were financially prosperous at the moment of the outbreak of war; others were struggling with difficulty. To some the war, by creating a sudden increased demand for their staple products, brought an unexpected flow of wealth; to others it shut and barred the doors of their markets, so that they were suddenly faced by exigencies which in ordinary times would have seemed tantamount to ruin even for communities which had previously been riding on a wave of prosperity. When such mischance, on the other hand, befell those who were already sunk in a slough of depression, little scope indeed was left to them for helping others. To have expected aid for the State, again, from those islands which were State-aided for the ordinary purposes of administration would have been absurd. Taking a considered view of all cases, however, it may safely be said not only that every island did its best but also that its best was a good deal better than anyone before the war would have thought possible.

For obvious reasons, moreover, while the war was still in progress and an unscrupulous enemy on the watch to strike by any means at the arteries of the British Empire's essential supplies, it was impossible to catalogue publicly even in general terms the splendid contributions of raw materials made by the Island Colonies and Protectorates. It is sufficient to say that the whole of their produce was unreservedly placed at the service of the King's Government. When we realize not only the extent of territory which they represent collectively, but also the varieties of soil, climate, and temperature which distinguish them, the fact thus stated expresses more perhaps than any detailed catalogues. Both the Island Governments and their peoples cheerfully acquiesced in the dislocation of their export trade through the grant of priority to the Empire's needs and the interruption of their trade even with distant neutrals through the blockade of Germany; and no one realized better than His Majesty's Government the incalculable value of the cordial cooperation of the Island Colonies and Protectorates in all the developments of economic warfare against the Empire's enemies. To this in no small degree may be attributed the fact that, in spite of the varying fortunes of the great campaigns in Europe and the effects of submarine piracy, the offensive momentum of Germany gradually dwindled while the defensive strength of the British Empire gradually increased.

## CHAPTER CCXXXVIII.

# THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES (IV.).

THE PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE—BRITISH ADVANCE ON OCTOBER 4, 1917—BROODSEINDE TAKEN—FALL OF NOORDEMDHOEK AND REUTEL—RESULTS OF THE DAY—DECISION FOR A FURTHER OFFENSIVE—FRENCH AND BRITISH ATTACK OF OCTOBER 9—ANTHOINE'S ADVANCE TOWARDS HOUTHULST FOREST—STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS—EFFECTS OF THE ITALIAN REVERSES—FRENCH AND BELGIAN ASSAULT ON THE MERCKEM PENINSULA—THE PENINSULA CARRIED—BRITISH ADVANCE IN THE SWAMPS TO GOUDBERG SPUR—CAPTURE OF GHELUVELT—GOUDBERG, PASSCHENDAELE, AND MOSSELMARKT CARRIED—END OF THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES—ITS RESULTS.

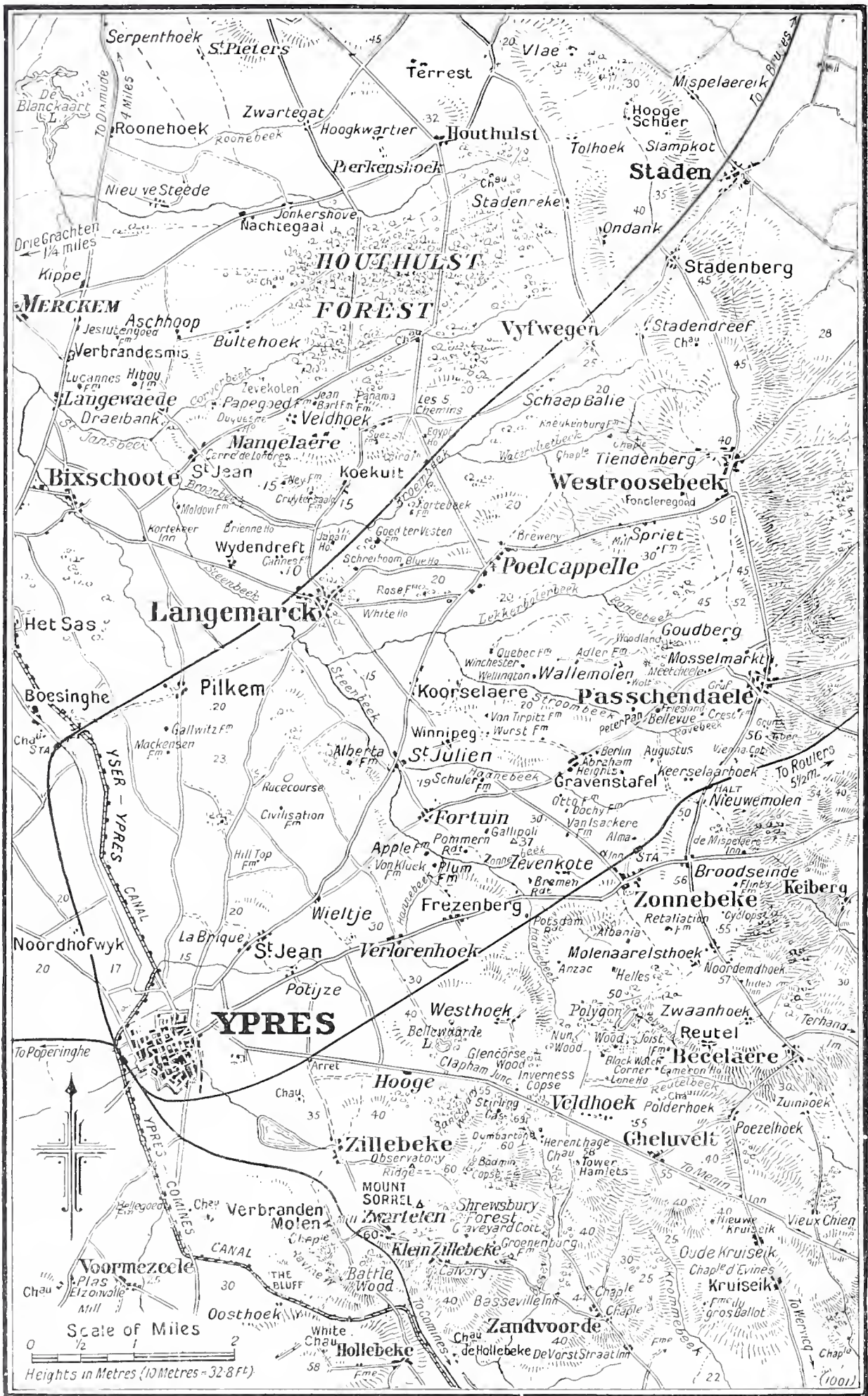
**S**HORTLY before dawn on October 3, 1917, the Germans, as was said in Chapter CCXXXVI. (p. 70), bombarded the British position between Tower Hamlets and Polygon Wood. The bombardment was followed by an infantry attack, but the severity of our artillery fire practically stopped it before it reached our lines, although to the south of the main road a few Germans managed to get through our artillery barrage. These were driven back by our infantry and our position was in no wise affected. During the day our airmen dropped eight tons of bombs behind the German lines. Hits were observed on three aerodromes near Courtrai and on a fourth near Cambrai. The Germans avoided countering our fighting machines, directing all their attacks against our long-distance bombing machines. Four German machines were driven down out of control and four were destroyed. During the fighting we lost six aeroplanes.

The weather, which had been fine for some time, changed on the evening of October 3, and turned to rain accompanied by a high wind which steadily increased during the next day

and at times amounted to a heavy gale. The frequent rain storms were highly detrimental to all troop movements. The weather also seriously hampered our airmen. Nevertheless they were able from time to time to do valuable work in reording the position of our troops during the advance and noting the concentration of the enemy for counter-attack. Notwithstanding the unfavourable conditions, the projected advance of the British was carried out in accordance with the plan laid down by Sir Douglas Haig, against the German main line on the ridge east of Zonnebeke. The main attack was delivered against the enemy's front over a length of seven miles comprised between the Menin Road and the Ypres-Staden Railway, while a subsidiary advance was made south of the Menin Road about a mile wide to capture certain points needed for the better security of our position in this part of the field.

The ridge which the British were about to attack ran from Inverness Copse and Gheluvelt through Polygon Wood, Molenaarselsthoek-Broodseinde to Passchendaele and was only roughly 40 to 50 feet higher than the ground to the west of it, from which it sloped up fairly





THE PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE.





[Official photograph.]

**GERMAN PRISONERS TAKEN NEAR TOWER HAMLETS MARCHING  
THROUGH YPRES.**

easily. On the eastern side the descent was somewhat steeper. The ridge, which was narrow towards Passchendaele, shrank down some 20 feet at Broodseinde, then rose again gently, and widened out considerably near Molenaarelsthoek and Noordendhoek. It then narrowed back to where the Polygonebeek and Reutelbeek flowed down in an easterly direction. Round Polderhoek it jutted out again and formed a considerable table-land, from Gheluvelt by Tower Hamlets and Inverness Copse, which diminished in breadth as it joined on to the Polygon Wood.

The ridge was not a clear-cut feature, but rather a series of low elevations strung together with slight valleys in between them. Here were many well-cultivated farms interspersed with woodlands, no large villages, but many substantially built farmhouses. This was before the ground became the battlefield of the Allies and Germans. Since then shell-storms had destroyed both woods and buildings. The former now consisted of tree stumps with the undergrowth and broken trunks and branches still forming a considerable obstacle which had been made more difficult by the plentiful use of barbed wire, while the small streams which drained these, especially in the case of the Polygon Wood, added to the hindrances to be overcome by our troops. This wood was over 500 yards in depth and was a position of strength improved by the construction there of many "pill-boxes." Towards Broodseinde the copses became less frequent, and from this point to Passchendaele the country was more open, with here and there ruined farms which

had been turned into strongholds by the Germans. Passchendaele was the only village of any importance though of no great extent—a number of small shops and cottages, a church and one villa dignified by the name of château. This had been made into a strongly fortified position. Keerselaarhoek, Nieuwemolen, Broodseinde and Molenaarelsthoek were mere tiny hamlets which had been used as nuclei for forts.

The ground was in many places marshy; especially was this the case near the Polygonebeek and Reutelbeek. Moreover, it had been so heavily shelled that the craters, half filled with water, and the ground in between thoroughly drenched with rain the night before, rendered the going over it difficult for our men. Everywhere there were clusters of machine-guns, some ensconced in craters, others in concrete forts or in the defences built up round farms and hamlets. Numerous "pill-boxes" were grouped about the position, but they do not seem to have been as plentiful as had been found to be the case on other occasions, probably because the Germans had relied more on positions farther to the west from which we had in earlier fighting expelled them.

This was shown by the fact that the eastern slopes of the ridge were covered with huts for men, stores, and ammunition; it had plainly been regarded, at one time, as a safe place for reserves, and for supplies for troops fighting down the slopes more towards Ypres. All these constructions had been destroyed by our artillery and the depôts removed farther back. The same reason had compelled the





[Official photograph.]

**A SAMPLE OF THE ROADS IN FLANDERS DURING THE ATTACK ON  
THE PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE.**

enemy to give up the use of the Wervicq road which ran through Becelaere and Broodseinde to Passchendaele, and had been a convenient means of communication from one flank to the other.

Our advances since July 31 had gradually driven back the Germans until now they were only left the ridge itself. We held the high ground at Inverness Copse, but to the north we were somewhat lower down the slope below Polygon Wood and Zonnebeke. Thence our line was bent back towards the Steenbeek by St. Julien. Opposite this part of it the Germans were on considerably higher ground which sloped up through Gravenstafel towards Passchendaele. Zonnebeke itself was dominated from Broodseinde, which stood some 30 feet higher.

The German garrison of this part of their line consisted of two divisions, and three fresh divisions (one of which was the 4th Guard Division) had also been brought to support and aid them in recapturing the positions we had taken on September 26.\* Thus each side contemplated an advance, the Germans to recover lost positions, the British to gain

fresh ground. The German intention was to recapture Zonnebeke and thrust back our troops from Polygon Wood and the high ground west of Gheluvelt. But our movement anticipated that of the enemy by a short time and brought it to naught.\* The German attack was to have been made on a front of under two miles, rather less than a third of the length of the British assaulting front.

The composition of our attacking force was as follows: On the right of the main body were troops from Kent, Devon, Cornwall, and the Scottish border, and these were directed against a line of works of which Polderhoek Château formed the centre. In contact with these and to the north of them infantry from Yorkshire, Northumberland, Surrey, and Lincolnshire were led to assault the German defences round Reutel and to the east of Polygon Wood. On the left of these, men from Surrey, Staffordshire, Devon, from the Border and the Highlands moved over the ridge against the little village of Noordendhoek. Next came the Australians, who pushed

\* According to some accounts there were two more divisions in reserve, making seven in all.

\* The difference between German and British time is roughly an hour, and Sixt von Armin appears to have ordered this attack for 7 a.m. (Berlin time), which would be approximately the same as the hour laid for our advance—viz., 6 a.m.

forward over the Becelaere-Passchendaele road, captured Molenaarelsthoek and Broodseinde and took up position to the east of the ridge of the spur over which they had come. New Zealanders on their left carried Gravenstafel and a strong series of works on the spur of that name. South Midland troops on the left of the Anzaes were pushed over to the far side of the Stroombeek, although the progress was much hindered by the sodden ground and the volume of water in the stream. More English Divisions advanced on both sides of the road to Poelcappelle. Both these forces reached and captured the objectives which had been laid down for them, with the exception in the former case of a single German point and, in the latter, of part of the village. Beyond the British left Anthoine's French Army held the ground. South of the Ypres-Menin road a limited advance was made by English troops, but this was only in the nature of a defensive flank to cover the right of the main attack.

It will be seen that the whole manœuvre formed a comprehensive and well-thought out scheme, intended to give us possession of the high ground from which we would overlook the country up to Bruges.

There had been the usual preparatory artillery bombardment on both sides. The Germans had brought together a very large number of guns of heavy calibre and had commenced their introductory fire on the 2nd. There had been a fairly continuous fire on our side also, which was intensified during October 3 and 4. Our preliminary bombardment extended over the whole length of attack and somewhat beyond its flanks, while farther along there was, of course, the usual amount of shelling but not of so intense a character. The German artillery preparation does not seem to have gone much beyond the Menin Road on the one side nor much beyond Broodseinde on the other. Nor does it seem as if Sixt von Arnim thought that our artillery fire foreboded an advance on any great scale or he would scarcely have meditated a counter-attack with only five divisions, including the two holding the German trenches. It would have been far too small a number for any serious purpose against the position held by the British, poor though that was. Be that as it may, there is certain evidence that the German commander did contemplate an advance about the same time as we did, and both he and his men were



[Official photograph.]

MOVING AN OBSERVATION BALLOON DURING THE BATTLE OF BROODSEINDE.



surprised when they were countered before they had time to form for attack by the artillery barrage covering our advance beginning at six o'clock and followed closely by our infantry. Some of the Germans were found, when our men went on, forming up in front of their trenches, but on most of their front they were in their first line, composed of trench-connected shell craters, when our men came into collision with them, greatly to their surprise.

After a wild and tempestuous night it was still hardly light when the British advanced. The wind was blustering and blew towards the Germans the smoke and dust from our shells. There was a slight drizzle accompanied by heavy mist over the surface of the ground, which covered to a great extent the assaulting troops and enabled them to approach the hostile lines without much loss. This was especially so in the centre of our attack. Moreover, our barrage was so much heavier than that of the Germans as not only to dominate their front line by means of the field guns and howitzers, coupled with the machine-gun fire, but also to hinder and diminish the fire of the German batteries behind their front which were deluged with shells from our heavy guns. This fire also hindered the bringing up of reinforcements.

The going was difficult in places, especially on the left about the valley of the Stroombeek, as

has been remarked earlier in this chapter, but over the higher ground of the ridge or on the slopes leading up to it, it was only the multitude of crater holes which constituted the physical hindrance which was seconded by the machine-gun fire from the pill-boxes of various descriptions. However, as the time barrage went on, our men kept on behind it. The resistance offered was very variable, least perhaps when the troops came on the German troops making ready to advance. For these to be severely treated by high explosive and shrapnel shells and swept in places by machine-gun fire was what they more or less expected, but when through the mist of nature and the smoke from the bursting shells they saw the British coming at them with the bayonet it proved too much for their shattered nerves, and over a great part of the line they either ran back or else surrendered in groups after very little resistance. A soldier, when asked if he had seen many Germans, remarked: "Lots of 'em, but only from behind." There were the usual scenes of men firing on our soldiers up to the last moment and then throwing down their rifles and holding up their hands. Sometimes their lives were spared, sometimes they were not. An example of the latter occurred near Gravenstafel, where there were a number of "pill-boxes." When the New Zealanders, working round to the rear of them, threatened



[Official photograph.]

BATTLE OF BROODSEINDE: LOADING SHELLS FOR A MOVE FORWARD.





[Australian official photograph.]

**BROODSEINDE RIDGE FROM RETALIATION FARM.**

their line of retirement, the garrisons came out under an officer and continued the struggle, taking cover where they could behind the tree stumps. When he thought that his men were likely to be cut off he gave a signal and they held up their hands and threw down their weapons. As our men advanced to receive them and were thus exposed to their fire without support from their neighbouring comrades they assumed a hostile attitude and shots were fired. Retribution was swift and complete; the treacherous officer was promptly shot and his men disposed of by bullet or bayonet.

The centre, where the Australians and the New Zealanders were, proved the easiest task offered to our troops on this day's fighting, whether because the Germans were not sufficiently full of fight or because the approaches to it were easier. As Mr. Bean, the Australian correspondent at G.H.Q., stated: "The most awkward task of the day fell to the grand British division on our right and those beside it who finished the capture of the Polygon Ridge." But there were more Australians in line that day than ever before fought together, and the New Zealanders were beside them. Both did good service.

The Australians pushed straight forward, the advance from Zonnebeke meeting with but little resistance. It took only a little more than two hours to capture Molenaarsthoek, Retaliation

Farm, and Broodseinde, thus cutting in half the Beelaere-Passehendaele road. Pushing beyond it, they established themselves well to the east of the crest line of the ridge.

The New Zealanders on the left of the Australians had a somewhat harder task. The position of the Germans which they had to assault was stronger because it had been longer in existence than the more recently improvised line with which the Australians had to deal. The main objective was the Gravenstafel Ridge, which was covered by the Haanebeek. The brook in itself was not formidable, but its banks had been so much knocked about by our shell fire that they had become almost obliterated and the narrow stream had become a considerable width of marsh, which was flanked by machine-guns from Otto Farm. It was taken by the New Zealanders, who captured some prisoners there, and then they pushed over the stream, toiling through the thick mud and water. The approach to Gravenstafel and Abraham Heights was guarded by a considerable fort known as Van Meulen. This was also reduced after a smart fight, and then our troops, advancing again, captured Gravenstafel and Berlin Farm above it. There were many "pill-boxes" in this part of the field: but they were taken in succession and a considerable number of prisoners secured. Here occurred the incident of treachery previously mentioned on this page.





SURRENDER TO THE AUSTRALIANS OF A "PILL-BOX" NEAR RETALIATION FARM.



Here was the limit of the New Zealanders' objective. They had won the Gravenstafel Spur and holding it formed, in connexion with the English troops on their left, a secure position. These English troops, men from the South Midlands, forced their way over the Stroombeek in spite of difficulties due to the water-logged nature of the soil, and moved against Wellington Farm and Winehester Farm, which were quickly reduced by bombing. Then they went farther up the slope against Terrier Farm. Aided by the coming up of a tank, which placed itself alongside this fort and fired volleys in through its loopholes, and by some New Zealanders who came up in support on their right, they took the farm. They were now brought to a standstill, and in spite of adverse circumstances managed to hold out during the night, although they had to pass it in the open field without shelter from wind or rain. It had been noticed in the advance that at several places where trees were available machine-guns had been put in them. They did some damage till discovered, but were then easily snuffed out.

To the north of these troops English divisions advanced on both sides of the Poelcappelle Road and captured the western half of the village with the church. In this operation they were considerably aided by tanks, which had here the road to advance by for a considerable part of the movement. On the left of the force were some of the Irish Fusiliers, who, going gallantly forward under a heavy fire and considerable difficulties from the ground, pushed over the Lekkerboterbeek and carried the enemy's machine-gun position on the Pilkem-Staden Railway which served to flank the front of the enemy's line behind the Stroombeek. Beyond them again Scottish troops moved forward under great difficulty through marshy ground and captured some "pill-boxes" defending the German position.

This completed the operation on the left flank of the British Army, which was here linked on to General Anthoine's force. Over 2,000 prisoners and a considerable number of machine-guns and trench-mortars with a few anti-tank guns were taken on this flank.

We have seen that in the centre of the battlefield the Australians had not had much difficulty in reaching their objectives. But on their right the task which devolved on the troops attacking this part of the German position was far harder, the country was much more difficult, being cut up and intersected by

Polygonebeek and the Reutelbeek with many little tributaries running into them and the remains of many small woods and copses, while behind Gheluvelt the ground was so divided up by small hills and valleys that the Germans could mass there secure from observation except from the air. The defence of Polderhoek Château, which stood on a mound, was very strong. Reutel had been well prepared for defence, and there were many "pill-boxes" and underground concrete strongholds scattered about.

From Noordendhoek to south of the Menin Road our troops were led against the enemy. Noordendhoek was assaulted by English, Border and Scottish troops. They advanced keeping pace with the Australians on their left. At this point Sixt von Armin had concentrated the 45th Division with the 4th Guard Division in support. They had been waiting in close formation to move forward to the attack when ordered. But the order never came, for before the time of attack was reached our assaulting barrage had completely crushed and driven back out of formation and in disorder all these troops. In this confusion they were completely surprised by the sudden appearance of the British infantry, and retreated, making but very little resistance. Noordendhoek was captured. Lower down, Yorkshire, Northumberland, Surrey and Lincolnshire troops cleared out the eastern side of Polygon Wood, and advanced on Reutel, which was captured but not without severe fighting and many losses, for the troops were taken in flank by fire from the valley of the Reutelbeek, whilst Joist Farm was also a difficult post to deal with, and, indeed, held out during the day. Men from Cornwall, Devon and Kent, with Scottish Borderers, were sent against Polderhoek Château and the ground north of Gheluvelt. The former was a work of great strength, and, being situated on a slight mound, had a good field of fire on all sides; the other defences of the Germans consisted of "pill-boxes" and entrenchments covering Gheluvelt and the Menin Road. At the first rush the outer defences of the château were taken, but our men streaming on past it were taken in reverse by machine-gun fire from the lower works of the château and other carefully hidden localities. Many of the enemy, armed with new light machine-guns, coming out in rear of the château, swept the ground in the direction of Reutel, while several columns of infantry were brought up from the east along the Reutelbeek.



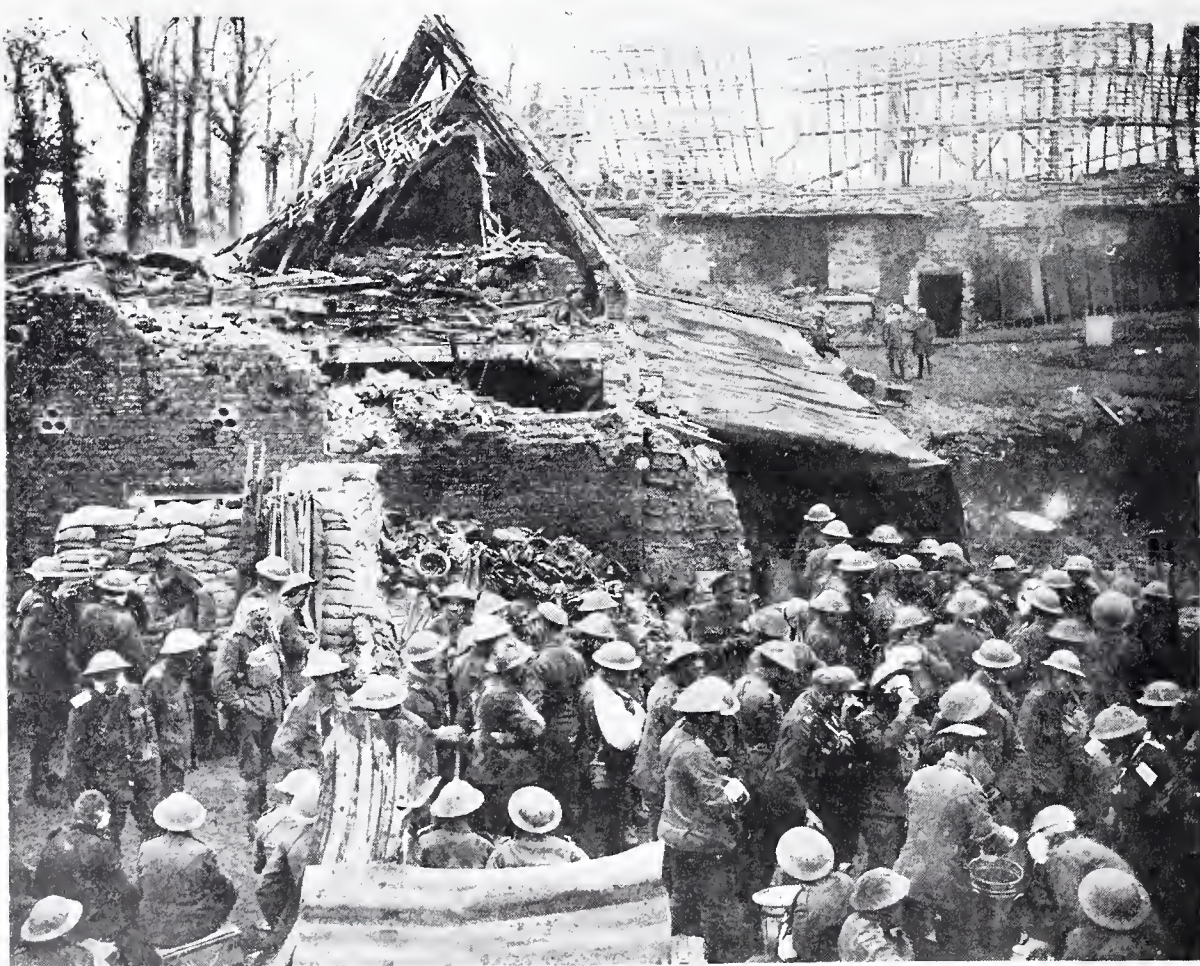
South of the Menin Road our advance was really of a defensive character to protect the right flank of our main attack, and shortly after noon the desired positions had been gained. But Sixt von Armin did not mean to let the British hold the ground they had gained without endeavouring to regain it. The original extensive attack he had intended was no longer possible to him, and the divisions he had accumulated for the purpose had been too severely handled, but he had still troops available for counter-strokes against our men. Between the Menin Road and Reutel seven successive endeavours were made and repelled by the united efforts of our guns, infantry and machine-guns. Later on an eighth drove our men back from Polderhock Château and from Reutel, of which we had occupied the eastern part. But although this formed a little dent in our newly acquired line the enemy were quite unable to penetrate through it.

North of the Ypres-Roulers railway a determined counter-attack was also made in three successive waves, but was driven back by our fire. At various points, notably east of Zonnebeke and west of Passchendaele, the

Germans were observed to be massing troops, but these were quickly dispersed by our artillery fire.

The operations on October 4 had on the whole been successful. We had made good our advanced line along the main ridge for a distance of 9,000 yards from Mount Sorrel, the original starting-point. We had not, it is true, reached Passchendaele, but we had progressed to a point on the road which leads to it for a distance of 1,000 yards from Broodseinde. The advance on July 31 had marked the commencement of the operations to seize the ridge, and in subsequent smaller efforts we had improved our positions. Zonnebeke was won on September 26—*i.e.*, we reached half-way up to the top of the slope—and on September 30 we had won Glencorse Wood, actually the highest point on the range. The ground now gained on the Gravenstafel Spur formed a good defensive flank to the new line, and enabled us to connect up well with the French line.

The question which had now to be decided was whether, as we had now a good position, it was better to stop where we were and put off any further attempt to take the offensive into



[Official photograph.]

DRESSING STATION NEAR WIELTJE ON THE ROAD TO BROODSEINDE.





[Australian official photograph.]

## A DUCKBOARD TRACK THROUGH THE WATERLOGGED GROUND.

Belgium (as had been Sir Douglas Haig's original intention) or whether it would be better to continue the advance.

Progress had not been nearly so rapid as had at one time seemed probable, and "the weather had been consistently unpropitious and the state of the ground, in consequence of rain and shelling combined, made movement inconceivably difficult," to quote Sir Douglas Haig's own words. The possibilities of further success were somewhat problematical, as the year was getting on. No doubt it was desirable to capture the remainder of the ridge, but could this be achieved "before winter set in"? The delays which had taken place had given time for the enemy to reorganize his defences and to bring up reinforcements.

Against these adverse factors there were to be set the losses which the Germans had sustained in their repeated and costly counter-attacks, and, adds Sir Douglas Haig, "the symptoms of confusion and discouragement in his ranks." Symptoms of this kind are always difficult to estimate accurately, and the estimator is very liable to look upon them as being more favourable than in fact they are. They were in this case no doubt largely based not merely on the statements of prisoners, which must necessarily be subject to a considerable discount, as unwounded men who surrender have plainly

shown a disinclination to continue the struggle or they would not have given themselves up, but also on the losses the Germans were known to have sustained. But it has been justly remarked, it is not the number of casualties, but the influence that these have on the survivors which is the true measure of their effect. It would not therefore be just to judge the *moral* of the German soldiers solely from the statements of those who had been made prisoners. But Sir Douglas Haig also states that documents captured during the battle of October 4 had shown "that the German Higher Command had already recognized the failure of their methods, and were endeavouring to revert to something approximating to their old practice of holding their forward positions in strength."

Such were the considerations which the British Commander-in-Chief had to weigh. The determining factor which finally decided him to undertake a further offensive, was "the desirability of assisting our Allies in the operations to be carried out by them on October 23, in the neighbourhood of Malmaison." Accordingly he made up his mind "to deliver the next combined French and British attack"—i.e., the British and General Anthoine's French Army—"on October 9."

During the night of the 4th the Germans shelled our new positions with considerable



vigour, but made no more infantry attacks, and during the next day there were no encounters of any moment. The British troops worked at their entrenchments. On the 6th the situation was unchanged. During October 7 heavy rain fell nearly all day; but in a fair interval the aeroplanes did some good work for the artillery, and the bombing machines dropped over  $2\frac{1}{2}$  tons of bombs on Staden and Courtrai. The wet prevented very much being

ground very difficult to move over; however, the concentration of our troops for the next day was continued although the pitch darkness of the night added to our difficulties. Fortunately these movements were unobserved by the enemy, who made no attempt to interrupt them by artillery fire.

All was now ready for a further advance, and at 5.20 a.m. on October 9 our troops moved out of their trenches on a front of six miles



[Official photograph.]

#### FIELD-MARSHAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG.

done by either side, and especially hampered the artillery in preparing the way for another advance. Twice towards dusk the Germans attempted to attack our new lines east of Polygon Wood, but on each occasion were beaten off by the united efforts of our infantry and artillery fire. The latter, too, did some good work against the enemy's guns in the position to which they had been driven back. The British infantry made a little progress along the Menin road, reaching the western outskirts of Gheluvelt, but, on the whole, the day was uneventful.

October 8 was marked by no events of importance. The rain continued and made the

from the east of Zonnebeke to the point where we were in contact with Anthoine's French Army north-west of Langemark. Our Allies also attacked, prolonging the assaulting line as far as Draibank—a further distance of about three miles. At the same time the enemy's attention was occupied by smaller advances on the right of the British advance from the east and south-east of Polygon Wood.

The country over which the greater part of the advance was made had been rendered very difficult indeed by the continual rain. The surface rests on a stratum of clay, and consequently rain does not run off as quickly as in more permeable soil. Hence it was that



shallow depressions or shell craters grew into pools, trenches, watercourses. The whole country had been churned up into loose soil by the shells and was literally a sea of mud, which was nearly always waist-deep and often deeper. That our men were able to advance through it is patent proof of their indomitable energy and courage, and Sixt von Armin may be excused if he thought the German Fourth Army holding the position behind this great obstacle was in a safe if not impregnable position. At any rate, he does not appear to have been expecting an attack and took no special precautions against it.

The French line of advance lay along the banks of the Corverbeek towards the south-eastern and southern borders of the Houthulst Forest, and the villages and strong points which connected this with the German line back to Poelcappelle. Chief among these were the former villages of Mangelaere and Koekuit. The left flank of the French was protected by the Belgians who held the ground about Knoeke, and by the Yser inundations.

It will be remembered that Anthoine's Army had taken post between the British and the Belgians, forming indeed the left flank to the former, and that about the end of July they held

the Yser Canal from Noordschote to near Boesinghe, and that on July 31 the portion of this army to the south of the inundation had won forward to Bixschoote and west of Wyldendreeft. On August 16 the left had been brought forward by the capture of Drie Grachten to the borders of the Martje Vaart and St. Jansbeek and they had come into position on the left of the British who were on the Steenbeek. The object of the fighting on October 9 was to push the French to the Houthulst Forest, in conjunction with the British left, which was to move forward towards Poelcappelle.

For three days before the new advance the east and south-east of Houthulst Forest and the other strong points to be carried had been subjected to an extremely strong bombardment, which dealt destruction to the German position. At 5.30 a.m., preceded by a slow moving barrage, slow moving because the infantry could not advance quickly through the sea of mud which faced them, the French moved onward towards their objectives. The fire of the protecting artillery was so effective that although the rate of advance was slow it was sure and carried out with very light losses, and by 10 a.m. the positions needed were won. After crossing the flooded Broenbeek—the



NORTH-COUNTRY TROOPS AWAITING IN RESERVE TRENCHES THE ORDER TO ATTACK VELDHOEK.

[Official photograph.]



Broenbeek runs into the Steenbeek near St. Jean just before the latter is called the St. Jansbeek and was at this point merely a wide and fairly shallow depression filled with liquid mud—the edge of the forest was reached, the villages of St. Jean and Veldhoek and Mangelaere, situated on the border, were captured, and the enemy was everywhere driven out of his defences. These included several farms organized as redoubts and a few “pill-boxes.” The average depth of the advance was a mile and a quarter, and this, notwithstanding the physical difficulties, had been accomplished in  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Moreover, the losses had been extremely light, under 500, while over 300 German prisoners had been taken. Notwithstanding the unfavourable weather and high wind, the French airmen had rendered considerable assistance to their infantry, flying low and attacking the Germans with their machine-guns besides reporting back the position of their own men and of the enemy.

On the right of the French were the British. The Guards co-operated with our Ally in the capture of Koekuit. They too had to pass the mud of the Broenbeek, but the resistance they met with was not severe, their Stokes guns beat it down and the Irish Guards in

passing lost no men. The Ypres-Staden railway embankment stood in between our men and their advance and had been prepared for defence, but does not seem to have proved a very formidable obstacle. Probably it had been severely handled by our artillery.

On the portion of the German defences which French and British troops took they happened on the German reliefs coming up to take the place of those who had hitherto garrisoned them. Such an operation is always liable to some confusion and this becomes worse confounded when troops engaged in it are suddenly struck. This is what occurred on this occasion. The 227th Division was coming in, another was going out of the trenches; it was said by prisoners that this division had been brought up by motor omnibuses from the Argonne to the rear of the German lines, where it arrived during the night. The Germans lost order and the confused masses, struck by the fire of artillery, machine-guns and infantry, fled hither and thither, many coming forward to seek safety in surrender. There it was that the Allies captured two guns and many machine-guns, while the prisoners amounted to several hundreds.

Some small counter-attacks were made by the enemy during the fight, and one of these



*(Australian official photograph.)*

AN AUSTRALIAN FIRST-AID POST IN A CAPTURED STRONGHOLD.



[Official photograph.]

## YORKSHIRES MOVING UP IN THE TWILIGHT.

succeeded in recovering a strong post taken by the French on their left. But the gain was of short duration. The French troops rallied, advanced again and carried it at the point of the bayonet. Thus on the left of the Franco-British attack complete success had been gained, and the troops set about consolidating their positions. To the right of the Guards other English divisions advanced along the Ypres-Staden railway and secured a line to the east of the Poelcappelle-Houthulst road.

Newfoundlanders who were with the English went straight to their objectives as far as Cinq Chemins Farm, where they captured an elaborate redoubt built up on the ruins and a few "pill-boxes." They met two counter-attacks, one before half-past eight in the morning, the other at ten. The first of these was shattered by rifle fire and the second by artillery fire, but afterwards, owing to heavy shelling, our line withdrew a little in front of the Poelcappelle road. Round the village of Poelcappelle, which was a mere mass of ruins, there was fierce fighting, and the enemy held out in the brewery at the near extremity, from which he swept the ground with machine-gun bullets, thus holding up the advance.

On the extreme right of our attack some very severe fighting was done by English troops of famous old regiments round about Reutel and Polderhoek. At Polderhoek the enemy had many machine-gun emplacements behind the château, and in spite of the assaults of our men held them. North of Polderhoek we retook

Reutel. The Germans had carefully hidden trenches which our men came on before they knew they were there. Here the Warwicks did some good work with the bayonet, aided by the Honourable Artillery Company. There was also stiff fighting about the position known as Judge Cottage and the adjoining copse. These were attacked and taken by some Territorial troops, and our line of objectives was made good beyond Reutel and Judge Copse.

The part of the Australians in the advance was not large, but was carried through with complete success. Aided by East Lancashire and Yorkshire battalions, with South Midland Territorials, they carried Nieuwemolen and Keerselaarhoek, and pushing farther on took other strong posts on the road towards Passchendaele. Yorkshire troops had one of the most formidable positions before them on the whole line of the advance, where stubborn fighting went on through a large part of the day.

The German report on the fighting of the 9th was:—

FRONT OF CROWN PRINCE RUPPRECHT.—Yesterday in the Flanders battlefield, French troops again entered into the battle by the side of 11 British divisions. The tremendous exertion of power on the part of the Allied Western Powers exhausted itself in battles which lasted throughout the day before the steadfastness of our Flanders warriors.

The attacks which broke forth in the morning, after the strongest drum-fire, were the introduction to a battle on an almost 20-kilometre front (12½ miles) on the crater fields between Bixchoote and Ghelnevelt, which was fought until far into the night, accompanied by the most violent and continuous artillery activity. The enemies repeatedly threw into the battle fresh forces, which often, and at some points as many as six times, assaulted our lines.





[Official photograph.]

### LAYING A RAILWAY AS FAST AS OUR MEN ADVANCE.

To the south of Houthulst Wood the enemy captured about 1,650 yards of ground near Draebank, Mangelaere, Veldhoek, and at the Poelcappelle railway station, until the counter-attack by our reserves struck him and limited his initial successes.

From Poelcappelle to south of Gheluvelt our brave troops have their battle lines firmly in hand. The repeated enemy attacks against this 13-kilometre front (8½ miles) all broke down with the heaviest of losses.

With the other armies the fighting activity was slight.

Nothing of importance occurred on October 10-11. On the night of October 11-12 heavy rain commenced again, but still Sir Douglas Haig thought some further advance was possible. Accordingly our troops went forward at 5.25 a.m. between the Ypres-Roulers railway and the Houthulst Forest. But the state of the valleys between the spurs was bad owing to the recent augmentation by the persistent rain of the streams running through them and as they intersected our line of advance no great progress could be made. Some important points, however, were gained.

The barrage proceeded up the slope towards Passchendaele past Poelcappelle, part of which had been in our possession since the 4th, followed by our infantry. Going forward, they secured a position in advance of the road which led from Poelcappelle to Houthulst Forest. The first infantry waves passed through redoubts between Passchendaele and the

ruins of Poelcappelle. The ground in front of Passchendaele was the scene of the hardest struggle. Our line of attack was, roughly, a mile and a quarter from the village, on the left; but it decreased gradually in the direction of Wallemolen. Immediately in front of it were a number of enemy redoubts. Beyond were two slight spurs, jutting out from the village of Passchendaele towards our front; on one, just west of the Zonnebeke road, was a German post called Crest Farm; the other was farther north. The machine-gun posts on these two spurs swept the ground between and the country below. The houses of Passchendaele sheltered also many machine-guns, which poured a constant barrage of bullets against our men. When the morning mist lifted, Passchendaele stood out sharp and clear. It formed a most prominent landmark on the battlefield. When, protected by the barrage, the men went forward the German batteries redoubled their fire. A curtain was laid across our front and maintained, while other groups of guns sought to break the infantry storming the outlying redoubts.

A short distance below the Ravebeek was a ruined patch of woodland, known as Augustus Wood, which was full of concrete posts and also numerous machine-guns, ensconced behind trees. They were defended by Jäger troops



who stuck to their posts. When the "pill-box" had been silenced the other guns kept firing until the crews were surrounded and bayoneted. Immediately below here there was hard fighting in the early morning—north-east and east of Poelcappelle, where there were many concrete positions, which were eventually captured.

Our gains on October 12 extended from the reverse slopes of the ridge east of Nieuwemolen, across the Roulers railway in front of Passchendaele, on both sides of the Lekkerboterbeek stream, near Poelcappelle, and on both sides of the Staden railway around Houthulst Forest. The Germans opposite occupied an irregular group of craters. We had pushed as far as we wished just south of the Ypres-Roulers railway. Our troops had made a good advance along the Passchendaele main road from Becelaere and were not many hundred yards from the village itself. On the north side of the railway English County troops and the Guards gained the points aimed at. It was, therefore, decided not to push farther on in face of the heavy rain which had so bad an influence on the movement. The German artillery tried hard to cut off supplies from our front troops by a heavy barrage. Howitzer groups came into action against what was

thought to be the new British front. Gas shell was used liberally. In the night our men had to lie masked in shell holes, but still they held on. Over 2,100 prisoners and a few guns had been taken.

The German report on the fight of the 12th was as follows:—

SATURDAY.—FRONT OF CROWN PRINCE RUPPRECHT. —After a short interruption, the battle in Flanders again revived yesterday. This time the English launched their attack on a narrower front (about 10 kilometres) [6½ miles] between the Langemarck-Houthulst and Zonnebeke-Morslede roads. Their employment of gun-power was specially strong.

After several fruitless assaults the English infantry succeeded in advancing in the crater land between the station and the village of Poelcappelle. In desperate fighting, lasting all day, our troops threw back the enemy on both sides of the Pendsbeek.

Our positions in and south of Poelcappelle were again vainly attacked in the morning, and with fresh forces in the evening.

The strong pressure of the enemy was directed on Passchendaele. Here, also, the English had to content themselves with a narrow strip of our forefield. Passchendaele is in our possession.

East of Zonnebeke the enemy attack collapsed, and near Gheluvelt a strong attack also failed.

Altogether, the enemy's gain, purchased with heavy sanguinary losses, amounts to two points of about one and one-fifth kilometre of ground where our lines were broken into. Everywhere else their efforts were in vain.

The artillery duel continued throughout the night: this morning it again increased to drumfire between the Lys and the Comines-Ypres Canal. According to reports to hand, no new attacks have taken place.



[Official photograph.]

TELEGRAPH LINE FOR NO-MAN'S-LAND:  
Signallers on the way to establish communications.



**EVENING.**—In Flanders there was artillery activity of varying intensity. There were no infantry engagements.

On the remaining land fronts there were no events of importance.

**SUNDAY.**—On the battlefield of Flanders the drum-fire between the Lys and the Deule was not followed yesterday morning by attacks.

Throughout the day the firing activity on the coast and from the Houthulst Wood as far as Gheluvelt was lively, and increased notably in the evening. Strong French and English reconnoitring detachments advanced at some points against our lines; they were repulsed.

In Artois and north of St. Quentin there was a temporary revival of the reciprocal firing in connection with reconnoitring engagements.

**EVENING.**—In the West there has been a firing duel of varying intensity in Flanders and north-east of Soissons.

It was now abundantly apparent that it would not be possible for us to capture the remainder of the Passchendaele Ridge before the end of 1917. The incessant rain had rendered the ground almost impracticable; the collapse



*(Official photograph.)*

**A DOWNHEARTED PRISONER.**

of Russia had permitted and would continue to permit Ludendorff to send reinforcements to Sixt von Armin. An advance from the Passchendaele Ridge against the German communications with Ostend and Zeebrugge had ceased for the present to be feasible and the reduction of the whole of the heights was no longer immediately necessary. Nevertheless, Sir Douglas Haig and General Anthoine decided to continue the offensive in Flanders for some time longer. Several reasons induced them to do so.

The disintegration of Russia and the dissolution of the Russian Army had completely altered the problems with which Haig, Pétain, and Cadorna were confronted. The initiative on the Western Front had now passed to the enemy. Haig and Anthoine accordingly had to regard the positions gained by them from the standpoint of the defensive. If they broke off the Third Battle of Ypres at this moment they would leave the Germans excellently placed for a counter-offensive. The possession by the enemy of Passchendaele itself and the high ground immediately north-west and south-west of it gave the German leader an admirable base for an attack designed to roll up from north to south our troops on the ridge facing east. Though, too, the whole of Poelcapelle was in British hands, the Germans had not as yet been entirely dislodged from the important position between the ridge and the Forest of Houthulst, out of which the enemy could debouch and move on Langemarck from the north. Against a counter-offensive from the west of the forest the French were not too well situated. To safeguard the whole Allied line between Langemarck and Dixmude, it was essential that the Mersin Peninsula to the south of Blankaart Lake should be cleared of the enemy. Under these circumstances it was plainly desirable that the battle should be continued until Passchendaele and its environs, with the Mersin Peninsula, should have been won.

There were other reasons why Haig and Anthoine did not break off the battle. The Fourth Battle of Verdun (August 20 onwards) had, as will be shown in a subsequent chapter, resulted in a French victory, which had materially altered for the better General Guillaumat's positions west and east of the Meuse to the north of Verdun. The French were almost as well placed there as they had been on February 22, 1916. But with the possibility of





[Australian official photograph.]

## A MULE TEAM STUCK IN THE MUD.

a great German offensive on the Western Front, the situation between Verdun and St. Quentin was unsatisfactory. The German Crown Prince had lost the eastern but still held firmly the western end of the long-contested Chemin-des-Dames Ridge north of the Aisne. It was desirable to drive him off altogether, and Pétain proposed to do this in the third week of October. To keep Prince Rupprecht from reinforcing the German Crown Prince, while the battle for this purpose round Malmaison was in progress, justified Haig and Anthoine in continuing their efforts in Flanders.

Lastly, as it happened, the unexpected and terrible defeats suffered by Cadorna on the Italian front between October 24 and November 7 provided an additional reason why the Allied offensive in Flanders should be continued, since Flanders was the area where the Allies could threaten a vital point (*viz.*, the submarine bases of Ostend and Zeebrugge), and whither, as a consequence, Ludendorff would be likely, if pressed, to dispatch troops from Russia instead of sending them to join von Below in Italy.

The fourth and concluding phase of the Third Battle of Ypres opened on October 22, the day

before the Battle of Malmaison and two days before the commencement of the Austro-German offensive in Italy. Since October 14 the stormy weather had ceased, and drying winds had counteracted the effect of the occasional showers. On the 16th Sixt von Armin had rectified his line south-east of Passchendaele, withdrawing the troops confronting the Australians a thousand yards to the spur jutting south-eastwards from the ridge and forming the watershed between the Passchendaelbeek and the Heulebeek. This spur terminated in a knoll, the Keiberg. The German position to the south-east of Passchendaele now ran along the spur to the Keiberg, and then curved south-west in front of Becelaere and Gheluvelt. South of Passchendaele the enemy's line struck north-westwards north of Poelcapelle over the Ypres-Staden railway to the southern outskirts of the Forest of Houthulst between the Corverbeek and the Broenbeek. For Haig's and Anthoine's ulterior designs on Passchendaele and the Merckem Peninsula it was necessary that the Allied line should be advanced up the east bank of the Corverbeek and west of the railway to the outskirts of the forest, and also north and east of Poelcappelle.



South of the Lekkerboterbeek we had established ourselves on the tip of the Wallemolen spur and we required more elbow room on the heights between that stream and the Stroombeek.

On Sunday, October 21, the hostile area from the Corverbeek to the Wallemolen Spur was subjected to intense bombardment with high-explosive, shrapnel, and gas shells, and Anthoine prepared to attack on a front of five-eighths of a mile, while Gough's troops on his right got ready for the execution of the major part of the operation contemplated. The evening was fine and rainless, but after midnight rain fell and a thick mist rose up, and when, shortly before 6 a.m. on Monday, October 22, the advance began it was impossible to see more than a few yards through the dense, white fog. The ground, despite the drying winds of the previous days, was in most places more like a morass than solid earth. The German 40th Division, supported by the 58th Division, opposed the French. Facing our men was the 26th Reserve Division, and, in the Poelcappelle region, the 3rd Naval Division, which had just relieved the demoralized and broken 5th Bavarians.

Anthoine's troops north of Mangelaere had to storm a number of strong, concreted redoubts and the ruins of Jean Bart Farm. Thanks to the preliminary work of the French artillery this was speedily accomplished, and the victors, after organizing the position, joined their comrades, who, east of Veldhoek, were helping the British to reduce a number of "pill-boxes." Some resistance was encountered at Panama Farm, north-east of Veldhoek, but it was soon overcome, and, at a trifling loss, the French, often up to their waists in water, reached the outlying copses of Houthulst Forest, 1,100 yards or so from the starting point. Two field guns and some prisoners had been captured by them.

Between the French right and the Ypres-Staden railway Gloucester, Cheshire, Lancashire Fusiliers, Manchester, and Royal Scots battalions advanced. As was only to be expected, the fringe of the forest was a tangle of "pill-boxes," and several field forts on the railway had not been knocked out by our guns. From the forest and north of it a hail of German shells descended. Wading through the sheets of water in their path, avoiding as best they could the water-filled craters, the English and Scots trudged forward. The Gloucesters, in touch with the French, reached their final

objectives in the copses, but, heavily counter-attacked, were driven back. They were immediately rallied, and with a gallant charge recovered the lost ground, taking 30 prisoners. The Cheshires and Lancashire Fusiliers had a somewhat similar experience, but the Manchesters and Royal Scots were less fortunate. In the neighbourhood of the railway, where before noon and in the evening they were violently counter-attacked, they had to dig themselves in some 600 or 700 yards in front of their old trenches. The Royal Scots had been dislodged from machine-gun emplacements on the railway embankment. At nightfall, however, the Allied troops were, generally speaking, well beyond the southern boundary of the forest, which was rather irregular in outline.

South of the railway the Northumberland Fusiliers and Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Berkshire battalions were engaged in severe fighting with the Marines of the 3rd Naval Division, defending the boggy slopes of the ridge between the Watervlietbeek and the Lekkerboterbeek east of Poelcappelle, and the summit of the Wallemolen Spur. The ground had been kneaded by the previous shelling into a pudding of slush. However, notwithstanding the physical difficulty of passing such an obstacle, we reached our objectives, capturing strongly fortified buildings and concreted redoubts on the hill east of Poelcappelle. The Northumberland Fusiliers working up the railway were vigorously counter-attacked, and, as the Royal Scots and Manchesters had not reached their objectives, they, too, halted some distance short of the points which they had been ordered to reach. In the evening a column of the enemy, mustering in the village of Spriet, charged down the Westroosebeek-Poelcappelle road but, when within 200 yards of our new positions were beaten off with machine-gun and rifle fire. The flying survivors, caught by our barrage, suffered severe losses. South-east of Poelcappelle on the Wallemolen Spur other British troops carried field forts beyond their objectives. In the course of the day 200 prisoners were captured by us. "On the Ypres-Menin road," said the German *communiqué*, which omitted all reference to our gains in the Poelcappelle region, "strong British attacks broke down completely." This was not correct. Plumer on the 22nd did not take the offensive.

The next day, Tuesday, October 23, at dawn, when the French were winning the Battle of Malmaison and gaining the remainder of the

Chemin-des-Dames Ridge, a German attack north-east of Veldhoek and one for the recovery of a fortified farm south-east of Poelcappelle were beaten off. In the evening the enemy endeavoured to penetrate between Anthoine's right wing and Gough's left. He was unsuccessful, and this, the seventh counter-attack since the morning of the 22nd, was bloodily repulsed, as was another counter-attack in the southern outskirts of Houthulst Forest on the evening

be reassured, and Sixt von Armin administered to them a dose of soothing syrup. That Gough and Plumer had penetrated so far into the Germans' fortified zone was easily explainable. The British were two or three times more numerous than the German troops and batteries and we had far more heavy guns than he had. A further advantage we possessed was that we had 80,000 soldier-labourers, while the unfortunate Germans who served the guns



[Austrian official photograph.]

#### INFANTRY GOING UP TO CONSOLIDATE A CAPTURED POSITION.

of the 24th, the day of the opening of the Austro-German offensive on the Isonzo front.

At this date General Sixt von Armin accorded an interview to a representative of the *Korrespondenz Norden*. The continued progress of the British in the Ypres salient and the victories of the French at Verdun and Malmaison had greatly alarmed the German public, and it was as yet not certain that the enemy's propaganda would bear more tangible fruits in Italy than it had borne in France after the battles of Craonne-Reims and Moronvilliers, when the sporadic mutinies caused by the circulation of the *Bonnet Rouge* and *Tranchée Republicaine* had been swiftly and effectually suppressed. The Germans, disillusioned by the patent failure of submarine warfare to end the war, had again to

had themselves to bring up their ammunition—a curious complaint, seeing that Sixt von Armin had enslaved populations to work for him. Yet what, he asked, had the British really achieved? He said:

They occupy the southern part of the heights which encircle Ypres, while we are in possession of the northern part of the heights, which obstruct the enemy's view of Bruges. Why should the mere possession of heights be of any decisive value? These heights are a dozen kilometres ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles) from the acknowledged goal of the English—namely, Ostend, Ghent, and Zeebrugge—without the possession of which the battles in Flanders, in spite of their partial successes, remain bloody defeats for the English.\*

\* Sixt von Armin must have been misreported. The heights in question are a great deal farther from Ostend, Bruges and Zeebrugge than  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and it was, of course, his business to make the distance as great as possible.



Thanks to the tenacious bravery of the English, they have succeeded in pressing us back farther in the Ypres bend and have driven a wedge into the centre of that bend, but that is all. There is no danger in this because, so long as the enemy continues his pressure at this point, he is exposed to our flanking fire and to the danger of being threatened from all sides in the rear, and he would be brought into the same sort of position that we were in when holding the Wytschaete bend, which jutted out into the enemy's position.

Allowing for the exaggerations in the state-



THE MERCKEM PENINSULA.

ment of Sixt von Armin, there was a certain amount of truth in his presentation of the tactical problems which had resulted from the long and violent struggle in Flanders. We had "driven a wedge" into the centre of the Ypres bend, but we had not reached objectives fully justifying the expenditure of men and munitions, and during the next few days the whole situation on the Western Front was to be radically changed in favour of the enemy. The Austro-Germans routed the 2nd Italian Army and entered the Friulian plain, and the 3rd Italian Army evacuated the Carso. On the 27th Cividale, on the 28th Gorizia, and on the 29th of October Udine fell into the hands of the enemy, and by the last day of the month our Ally's armies were behind the Tagliamento. That day, it is true, Allenby captured Beersheba, but no successes in Palestine could counterbalance crushing defeats in Italy. All of a sudden Haig and Pétain were confronted with the imperative necessity of pouring troops and guns into Italy. It was no longer possible to exploit their successes at Ypres and on the

Chemin-des-Dames Ridge. The best that could be now hoped from offensives in France and Belgium was that they might relieve the enemy's pressure on the Italian front.

While the issue in Italy still hung in the balance Sir Douglas Haig and General Anthoine on October 26, 27, and 28 again attacked. Anthoine was assisted on the 29th by the right wing of the Belgian Army. It was the first time since the Second Battle of Ypres that the Belgians had taken the offensive, but in the interval they had had a most trying experience, their lines being targets for the numerous German guns between the North Sea and the Forest of Houthulst. The objective of the Belgians and French was the Merckem peninsula, those of the British the southern and western environs of Passchendaele and, in the Ypres-Menin road area, Polderhoek Château and Gheluvelt.

For two days the weather had been clear but cold; but between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. on Friday, October 26, clouds blew up and rain fell in torrents. The delay in commencing the offensive in Flanders was now telling its tale. As winter came on, the ground became every day worse. The floods had broadened, the streams were swollen, and the quagmires were mostly unswadable. This last misfortune of the rain storm put a finishing touch to the miserable conditions under which the Allies were fighting, and but for the need of rendering indirect aid to the Italians it is probable that the battle would have been postponed until the weather cleared. The startling and bad news of the disaffection in and collapse of the 2nd Italian Army, however, precluded such a postponement, and at 5.45 a.m. the advance began. The rain had momentarily ceased, but shortly afterwards it came down in sheets and continued with short intermissions throughout the day. A thick mist added to the discomfort of the drenched and mud-spattered French and British. A gusty and bitter wind also blew across the battlefield, and the men on the tops of auto-omnibuses tilted their rusty steel helmets sideways to obtain protection from the biting rain-laden blast.

The plan of Anthoine and Ruequoy, the Belgian Chief of Staff, was to attack in echelon from right to left. On the 26th the French proposed to storm the Papegoed Wood, north of Mangelaere, on the left bank of the Corverbeek, ford the stream and at the same time cross the Lower Steenbeek and dislodge the enemy from Draebank, from Hibou Farm,

700 yards to its west, and from Lucannes Farm. 1,500 yards beyond, near Langewaede, on the road from Steenstraate to Dixmude. By this operation they would seize the south-eastern end of the Merkem peninsula. Having thus turned the German defences, the French were the next day to attack on a wider front, and their left, issuing from the Drie Grachten bridge-head, was to carry Luyghem, and, as soon as the causeway through the floods leading to that village was secured, Ruequoy's Belgians were to cross the floods in boats at the point where the Yperlee Canal joins the Yser and assault the enemy's positions between Luyghem and the south of Lake Blanckaart. By these successive stages the whole of the Merkem peninsula was to be won and the Allied line established within less than 3,000 yards of the western face of Houthulst Forest, the southern side of which had been already entered by the French and British north of Veldhoek.

The programme of Anthoine and Ruequoy was carried out without any hitch. On the 26th, after an intensive bombardment, the French broke into the Papegoed Wood, ejected the Germans from the remaining "pill-boxes" to its west, and, with water up to their shoulders, forded the Corverbeek. Simultaneously their comrades entered the Lower Steenbeek and reached the opposite bank. The German garrison in Draebank, attacked from two sides, was killed, wounded, or captured. Hibou and Lucannes Farms and the intermediate "pill-boxes" were soon reduced, and the French secured the Steenstraate-Dixmude road round Langewaede. Alarmed at this success of Anthoine, Sixt von Armin in the evening rushed the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division into the Merkem peninsula. During the night the French engineers, working in the water up to their armpits, threw pontoon bridges over the Lower Steenbeek, west of Langewaede.

Soon after 5 a.m. on Saturday, October 27, Anthoine's troops on the right bank were joined by those on the left bank of the Steenbeek, while a column emerging from the bridge-head of Drie Grachten assaulted the enemy defending the half-submerged causeway which led to Luyghem. The French on the extreme right in front of Draebank faced east, covered by their comrades across the Corverbeek in Papegoed Wood. They protected the troops moving up and on both sides of the road from Steenstraate through Langewaede to Dixmude.

The fortified villages of Verbrandesmis and Kippe behind it blocked the road. To the north-east of Verbrandesmis, nearer the Forest of Houthulst, were the concreted Jesiutengood Farm, next the hamlet of Klooster-molen, and just north of it the village of Asch-loop. From Verbrandesmis a road ran north-westwards parallel with the Lower Steenbeek



LIEUT.-GENERAL RUCQUOY,  
Belgian Chief of Staff (on the right) shaking  
hands with General Plumer.

through the considerable ruins of Merkem to Luyghem. The remains of Luyghem were slightly above the level of the marshes and the machine-guns in them commanded the causeway from Drie Grachten. The ground everywhere in the peninsula was frightfully boggy and, besides the above villages, there were innumerable redoubts and "pill-boxes" to be reduced. The tongue of land ended north-east of Luyghem at the Blanckaart Lake, an irregular patch of brackish water midway between Merkem and Dixmude. North of the lake, by the side of the high road to Dixmude, was the Château de Woumen, the scene of desperate fighting during and after the Battle of the Yser. The northern fringe of the Forest of Houthulst was on a level with the southern end of Blanckaart Lake. Consequently, if the





*French official photograph.*

#### FRENCH ENGINEERS BUILDING A PONTOON BRIDGE IN FLANDERS.

French and Belgians evicted the enemy from the Merekem peninsula, their line between the lake and the Corverbeek would confront the whole of the western face of that wooded region.

Verbrandesmis, the point of the salient defended by the Bavarians, which had been battered to pieces by the French guns, was speedily carried, but the enemy in the moated Jesiutengoed Farm and in Kloostermolen fought desperately. Driven from these points, they rallied in the ruins of Kippe and Aschhoop. Meanwhile the German artillery had been fiercely barraging the bank of the Steenbeek in front of Merekem, which is connected by a road with Kippe. The French rushed over the pontoon bridges, passed through the barrage and ploughed their way in the mud to the concreted cellars. Here there were several stiff encounters, but the Bavarians were finally expelled. The pursuers, emerging from the ruins, marched some on Kippe, others on Luyghem. The former village, assaulted on two sides, was carried, as was Aschhoop to its south-east. But Luyghem and the causeway from Drei Grachten were not reduced for several hours. The causeway was wired and barricaded and it was not till late in the afternoon that the French swarmed over the last barricade and approached Luyghem. The moment it was perceived that the causeway was won the Belgians round Knoeke jumped into their

flat-bottomed boats and poled across to the marshes north of the village. Disembarking, they secured the southern shore of Blanckaart Lake, and attacked Luyghem from the north. One by one the redoubts in this now isolated spot were carried, and by the morning of Sunday, October 28, the French and Belgians were in possession of the Merekem peninsula. They had captured over 300 prisoners and killed or wounded great numbers of the Bavarians, who had fought very stubbornly. The patience and skill of Anthoine had once more been brilliantly exhibited. By his clever handling of the French artillery and his manoeuvres he had achieved this notable success at a small cost. Ruequoy, too, and his Belgians were deserving of praise. The concealment of the flotilla of flat-bottomed boats from so vigilant an enemy had not been easy, and the courage of the troops who moved slowly through the floods in face of shells and machine-gun fire proved again that the Germans had completely miscalculated the quality of the Belgian Army. "Oh, the poor fools!" said von Stumm, Counsellor of the German Legation at Brussels, on August 5, 1914, to Mr. Hugh Gibson, Secretary of the American Legation there. "Why don't they get out of the way of the steam-roller? We don't want to hurt them, but if they stand in our way they will be ground into the dirt. Oh,



the poor fools!"\* The steam-roller had passed over most of Belgium, but on October 27 and 28 the "poor fools" had, as at Liège and on the Yser, taught their insolent enemy that the German machine was by no means the "steam-roller" suggested.

We will turn now to the operations of Gough and Plumer on Friday, October 26. They consisted of three distinct pushes on short fronts. The English Naval Brigade and the Canadian Division (brought up from Lens) strengthened

Plumer's left wing; they had been substituted for the Australasians. While those attacked between the Lekkerboterbeek and the south of Passchendaele, Gough with West Lancashire and North-Country troops was to keep the enemy north of the Lekkerboterbeek fully employed, and at the same time a subsidiary attack was to be delivered on Polderhoek Château and Gheluvelt.

At 5.45 a.m. on October 26 the West Lancshires and North-Countrymen set out on their perilous enterprise. Just south of the Ypres-Staden railway they were faced by a long, solid

\* *A Diplomatic Diary*, by Hugh Gibson, p. 17.



BUILDING A NEW WHARF ON A CANAL IN FLANDERS.

[Official photograph.]





[Official photograph.]

## AN AMMUNITION COLUMN PASSING A HEAVY BATTERY.

block of concrete buildings, originally built as a barracks for the crews of the long-range guns with which two years before the Germans had fired over Ypres at Poperinghe. Between the Broenbeek and Watervlietbeek, to the right of this fortress, was a great marsh out of which protruded various "pill-boxes." From the south bank of the Watervlietbeek to the north bank of the Lekkerboterbeek strings of redoubts had been constructed to prevent the British moving on Westroosebeek and turning Passchendaele from the north. Our men, descending the slopes and sinking deeper at every step, were shelled from the Houthulst Forest, from Vyfwegen, the Westroosebeek Heights and the Goudberg Spur. Their left, enfiladed by the machine-guns in the concreted barracks, which at first defied all the efforts of artillery and infantry, was held up, but at the end of the day some strong points had been secured, including the barracks and Rubens and Memmeling Farms. Though the West Lancashires and North Countrymen had failed to make any great progress, they prevented by their assaults the enemy from falling on the left flank of the London Territorials, the Naval Brigade, and the Canadian battalions moving along the high ground north and south of the Paddebeek on Goudberg and Passchendaele.

The London Territorials from the east of Poelcappelle endeavoured to reach and cross the Lekkerboterbeek above its junction with the Paddebeek, but were repulsed. But the

men of the Naval Brigade swarmed at 5.30 a.m. down the slopes of the Wallemolen Spur and plunged into the flooded stream of the Paddebeek, the water rising above their waists. The farther bank of the stream was one mass of wire entanglement, through which, however, lanes had been cut by our shells. On the rising ground beyond was part of the old Staden-Zonnebeke trench system, now transformed into a street of "pill-boxes," among them Moray House and Varlet House. From these redoubts jets of bullets whipped the surface of the floods, and mowed down our men scrambling up the muddy bank to the gaps in the wire entanglement. Losing heavily, the British mounted the slope and with bomb and bayonet assaulted the "pill-boxes." Moray House, Varlet House, and one or two more of the field forts were stormed, and a lodgment on the north bank of the Paddebeek was secured. "Your men," said a German officer taken prisoner, "are magnificent. They have achieved the impossible. We did not think any troops could have crossed such ground."

While the Naval Brigade was struggling through the Paddebeek, the Canadians just north of the Stroombeek from Wolf Farm and Peter Pan House were attacking the 11th Bavarian Division (consisting of the 3rd Bavarian Infantry Regiment and the 13th and 22nd Bavarian Reserve Regiments) defending Bellevue Spur. The northern face of the spur was a mass of concrete. The hamlet of Bellevue



at its tip had been converted into a group of redoubts commanding the low ground on the north; machine-guns on the southern face swept the boggy valley of the Ravebeek below and the shorter and narrower Crest Farm Spur which jutted out from the Passchendaele Ridge just south of the ruins of Passchendaele, and the western slopes of the ridge. The road from Ypres to the ridge above Passchendaele went over the Bellevue Spur; a few hundred yards behind Bellevue it was crossed by the Wallemolen-Zonnebeke road. The sections of these roads on the spur were streets of "pill-boxes." Concreted holes pitted the upper slopes, and snipers were posted thickly between the machine-gun emplacements. The valley of the Ravebeek being unfordable, the spur could be attacked only from the west and north.

At about 5.30 a.m. enemy aeroplanes circling through the mist detected that the Canadians were assembling and 10 minutes later they were heavily barraged. Through this barrage and sheets of machine-gun fire at 5.45 a.m. they began slowly and painfully wading across the water on No Man's Land. The distance to be traversed in the trackless morass was 1,500 yards, and it took them over an hour to advance half that distance, as they struggled knee deep in mud up the slippery, pathless bank. When they reached the crest they were confronted by

the rows of "pill-boxes" on the Wallemolen-Zonnebeke road. So intense was the burst of fire from these redoubts that they and their comrades farther north were forced to fall back.

Soon after 11 a.m. our artillery again barraged the Bellevue Spur, and the Canadians once more attacked, this time closing round the foot of it down to the waters of the Ravebeek. The German gunners, not perceiving this manoeuvre, deluged the summit of the spur with shells. The cluster of redoubts at Bellevue was then stormed. At 4 p.m. a column of Bavarians issued from Passchendaele and charged down the spur to retake them. Our barrage caught the column, and none of the enemy got within 400 yards of the Canadians. At 4.40 p.m. another mass of Bavarians descended from the Goudberg Spur, and tried to fall on the rear of the Canadians in Bellevue. This and two feebler counter-attacks later were broken by our artillery. At 6 p.m. our men delivered a final attack. They bombed and bayoneted the enemy from the "pill-boxes" on the Wallemolen-Zonnebeke road, seized those still untaken on the road from Ypres to the north of Passchendaele, and with their Lewis guns shot down the fugitives making their escape towards the Passchendaele Ridge. Some 430 Bavarians were captured in one stretch of 300 yards of road, and no less than 18 machine-guns.



A FIELD GUN IN DIFFICULTIES.

[Official photograph.]



The Canadians' carrying of Bellevue and its spur had been materially assisted by their comrades—also Canadians—to the north, between them and the Naval Brigade. By their stubborn fighting these Canadians had kept off the enemy descending from the Goudberg Spur or northern end of the Passchendaele Ridge into the mud flats south of the Paddebeek against the rear and left flank of the troops assaulting the Bellevue Spur. Similarly other Canadian battalions south and east of the Ravebeek working upwards towards Deck Wood and Decline Wood had kept the Bavarians at Crest Farm and south of Passchendaele so fully employed that they were unable to help seriously the garrison on Bellevue Spur. In vain Sixt von Armin sent field batteries through Passchendaele which fired point blank into the advancing waves of our men. At nightfall the Canadians were but 900 yards distant from the southern edge of Passchendaele itself. A counter-attack in the afternoon had been heavily repulsed. After sunset low-flying enemy aeroplanes signalled with flash lamps to the field-batteries, and the Canadian outposts were frequently shelled, bombed, or fired upon from the air by machine-guns.

Plumer's subsidiary attack on the 26th, north of and along the Ypres-Menin road, was designed with the object of attracting Sixt von Armin's reserves from the Passchendaele region. It had been observed that Sixt von Armin, relying on the impassability of the ground, and the strength of his defences, had placed a portion of his reserves three and a half miles east of Polderhoek Château and Gheluvelt. If such important points in his scheme of defence were carried by a *coup de main*, these reserves would certainly be used in an attempt to recover them, and could, therefore, not be directed on Passchendaele. It was decided, therefore, to make the attempt, and in the night of the 25th-26th English battalions silently mustered on the edge of the Reutelbeek opposite Polderhoek Château and on both sides of the Ypres-Menin road. From a narrow loop-hole in the squat concrete tower of the Château a German artillery observer looked down over a brown patch of ground and broken timber, once a park, but the rain which began to fall hid our movements. The regimental commander had retired to rest in a deep, spacious wood-lined and papered cellar, with 10 feet or so of concrete and steel overhead. Outside, a few sentries in the swamp were mounting

guard. Just before 5.45 a.m. the British guns hurled shells on the château, and the sentries retired to their refuges, but it was not till the Englishmen were bombing the château itself at 7 a.m. that a terrified orderly rushed into the regimental commander's cellar and aroused him from his slumbers. He found the garrison in a state of wild confusion. Some trying to escape were being laid flat by Lewis guns; others were huddled together panic stricken. With his adjutant he held a hasty conference, while bombs were bursting at the doors. Knowing how long it would take for the distant reserves to cross the swampy valley west of Terhand, they arranged to surrender, but before this was accomplished the commandor was killed. The adjutant and the survivors held up their hands and were sent off to Ypres, while their captors prepared to resist the masses of the enemy slowly approaching from the east. Meanwhile Gheluvelt had been entered and prisoners secured.

As was expected, the German artillery at once focused their fire on Polderhoek Château and Gheluvelt and Sixt von Armin's reserves came into action. Our men, many of whose rifles and machine-guns had been choked with mud, kept the Germans at bay for a time, and then slowly retired to their lines. In the fighting on the 26th the British took 800 prisoners, but Sixt von Armin, as usual, claimed to have gained a victory. The German *communiqué* ran as follows:

On the battlefield in the middle of the Flanders front the French and English again brought up strong forces throughout the day yesterday, in order to seek a decision in battle. The success was ours. The enemy divisions suffered heavily, without result, in our defence zone.

Increased artillery fire was directed on the fighting district before the enemy advanced to attack; behind the advancing roller of fire (*Feuerwalze*) his storming troops were launched forward.

North of Bixchoote the French reached as far as Bulthoek; thence they were thrown back into the crater-land by our counter-thrust. Between the Klerken-Poelcappelle road and the Roulers-Ypres railway the English pressed forward in repeated assault. After fluctuating fighting, which was especially bitter west of Passchendaele, the enemy had to content himself with a few crater lines in front of his position of departure.

In addition to the main attack, several English divisions were launched against our front from Becelaere as far as south of Gheluvelt. At the outset they broke into Poezelhoek Park and into Gheluvelt, but by our powerful counter-attack, however, the enemy was soon thrown back beyond the old line. Local engagements lasted until into the night, the intense firing only diminishing temporarily.

Troops from all parts of the Empire took a glorious part in bringing about an issue which, on the day's fighting, was favourable to us.

The "few crater lines" wrested from the



Germans, according to the above account, happened, however, to be the redoubtable fortress of Bellevue Spur, the key to Passchendaele. An extract from the diary of a prisoner about this date exhibits in detail the "glorious part" taken by some of the Janissaries of the German Sultan. It describes the method by which gaps in the line were filled with "cannon fodder":

The first battalion is to supply a draft of 99 men. To conduct them to —, 300 men are detailed, some

The termination of the long-drawn struggle which had begun on July 31 was now at hand. It had opened when the memory of the victory of Messines was fresh in the minds of our men, when it was still hoped against hope that the Russian Revolution would regenerate the forces of the Eastern Colossus and spread dissension in Germany and Austria-Hungary, when Cadorna's victorious troops seemed destined to capture Trieste and to follow in the footsteps of the army of Bonaparte in 1797. Un-



[Official photograph.]

#### VIEW LEADING UP TO PASSCHENDAELE.

with rifles to escort the draft, others to act as pickets. In the afternoon our men are ready and waiting to escort their comrades of the first convalescent company, which at last arrives.

But what a sight it is! In front march a squad of gunners. Alongside each four, to right and left, march two gunners with rifles, and another squad in rear to guard the German soldiers, our brave lads in field grey, who, as the newspapers relate in such beautiful language, are joyfully going forth to destroy our enemies, inspired by love of the Fatherland. There is one guard for every two men.

Is it not a scandal that our boys in field grey are led out into the field to fight and give their lives for the Fatherland like criminals to the hangmen, or, worse, like cattle to the slaughter? Is it not enough that hours before, in fact as soon as the departure of the draft was announced, men not forming part of the draft should be prevented from going into the town by pickets every five yards in every direction? \*

\* From the *Manchester Guardian* of November 9, 1917.

happily in the interval there had been no second Messines for our troops, but a succession of bloody battles resembling those in the Somme area of the preceding year, Russia was now in rapid process of dissolution, and the Italian Army had sustained the greatest defeat suffered by the Allies in the West since the Battle of Charleroi. To lend indirect aid to Cadorna and to secure his positions against the counter-offensive which was almost certain to come when the German armies of the East were transported to Belgium and France, Sir Douglas Haig was forced to call on his weary and depleted troops for fresh exertions. Anthoine by his capture of the Merckem penin-





[Official photograph.]

THE BATTLE OF PASSCHENDAELE: ENEMY SHELLS SEARCHING A BATTERY BEYOND THE ROAD.



sula had obtained a good defensive position. But until Passchendaele and the ridge north of it was in our possession the gains of the British in the Third Battle of Ypres would be precarious. On Tuesday, October 30, the next step was taken towards winning them. For a couple of days the weather had been fine, and after a moonlight night, with occasional drifting clouds, the dawn broke clear and cold.

At 5.40 a.m. the London Territorials north of the Lekkerboterbeek advanced, the Naval Brigade endeavoured to work up both banks of the Paddebeek in the direction of Goudberg, and the Canadians from the Bellevue Spur pushed forward up the slopes towards the little hamlet of Meetcheele on the spur north-west of Passchendaele. Simultaneously other Canadian battalions east of the Ravebeek attacked Crest Farm, and on the bank of the main ridge, under enfilading machine-gun fire from the positions on Keiberg Spur, south-east of Passchendaele, advanced on the ruins of the village. The fighting was very similar to that on the 26th. At 10 a.m. a downpour of rain came on, a bitter wind blew, and mist settled on the surface of the ground. The London Territorials and the Naval Brigade could make little headway in the boggy region, but the Canadians were again successful. They reached the Meetcheele Spur, and stormed the "pill-boxes" of the hamlet, being, however, held up by the redoubts at the cross-roads south of Goudberg and north-west of Passchendaele. By the edge of the swamp in which rises the Ravebeek they bombed four machine-guns in Friesland Copse. East of the Ravebeek they climbed up the tip of Crest Farm Spur and captured the fortress there about 6 a.m. At 8.30 a.m. Prussian troops counter-attacked from the direction of Mosselmarkt, but were dispersed by the British barrage and the Canadian machine-gun fire. Later, when the rain fell, daring enemy airmen flew over the Canadians, dropping bombs and firing on them. The Prussian Guards assaulted the Canadian right resting on the Ypres-Roulers railway. Two counter-attacks of Bavarians were made to recover the Meetcheele Spur, and one against the extreme left of the Canadians. All the counter-attacks were repulsed, and at the close of the stormy day the line of the Dominion troops was but 500 yards away from Passchendaele. A fortified farm—"Fürst Farm"—west of Meetcheele had, however, not been reduced. British Columbians had greatly dis-

tinguished themselves in the fighting for Crest Farm. During the struggle Passchendaele seems to have been temporarily evacuated by its garrison. Nearly 200 Germans (including three officers) were taken, which brought the number of prisoners captured by us in October up to 9,125. We had secured in the period 15 guns, 42 trench-mortars, and 431 machine-guns.

With the western ends of the Crest Farm and Meetcheele Spur in our hands and the British not more than 500 yards from the ruins of Passchendaele, the capture of that dominating point on the main ridge could not long be delayed. Though Hindenburg is reported to have ordered the 11th Prussian Division (recruited in Silesia), which had largely replaced the beaten Bavarians, to retain Passchendaele at all costs, it is impossible that the order, if authentic, was intended to be taken literally. The possession of Passchendaele would have been of inestimable value to us at the beginning of August, but the succession of deluges which had waterlogged the valleys and ridges to its west had left Passchendaele and its environs an island protruding from a sea of mud. The top of the narrow ridge from Gheluvelt to the crest of the Goudberg Spur, north of Passchendaele, could not possibly form the base for any immediate advance on Roulers, Ostend and Bruges. Between it and Poelcappelle there was now, and would be till the late spring of 1918, country almost as impenetrable as the flooded Yser region. Similar was the district from Poelcappelle to the Houthulst Forest, which had become a swamp with a few narrow tracks winding among broken trees. The rain and the inundations had created an impassable barrier between the North Sea and the Passchendaele Ridge, while to widen our front east of the ridge from Passchendaele to Gheluvelt would require the presence of the troops and guns being sent with Plumer to Italy or those which were about to be dispatched to reinforce Sir Julian Byng west of Cambrai. Passchendaele, with the hamlets of Mosselmarkt and Goudberg to its north-west, was needed by us as a bastion at the angle of the salient Houthulst Forest, Passchendaele, Tower Hamlets; but for Hindenburg and Ludendorff, already probably meditating their offensives between the Ypres-Comines Canal and La Bassée and between Arras and the Oise, it was now an unimportant post. Was it, then, worth while to subject the



German infantry in that angle to such terrifying experiences as those so graphically depicted by the *Blin Post* on November 7, the day after Passchendaele was secured by the Canadians? Although there are some patent inaccuracies in the letter published by the *Post*, it may be inserted because it recalls to the reader the essential features of the gigantic effort of the British in the Third Battle of Ypres.

The letter was headed "In the Flanders Hell," the attack of the "Canadians and Scots" described was perhaps that on October 26. Neither Scots nor tanks, however, were employed by us then, nor on October 30, nor on November 6:

For weeks, day and night (he says) the British kept our position under fire. Ever fiercer burned the glowing stream that poured crackling down upon us. Every day this fire grew hotter. Our artillery replied powerfully. The Army *communique* spoke of a concentration of enemy artillery fire on individual sectors. Even we cannot describe what that means. The history of the world has never seen anything more awful. All calibres were brought into action, and a crater of unprecedented extent opened beside the others, was excavated afresh, swallowed up the old ones, spread out beyond the lime trees, and threw up the hinterland. Nothing remained intact of all that nights of hard labour under the enemy's fire had created. The destroying fire did its work with depressing thoroughness, seeming to extinguish all life, and now came the turn of the smoke shells. Thick smoke lay before our eyes, so that we could see nothing, and yet ever farther forward must we push our death-defying posts. A real fog is mere

patchwork compared with this artificial fog which the British send out in order to veil their dispositions. When this appeared inadequate the enemy employed gas, and the evil mists came rolling towards our lines and passed over them: only our gas-masks prevented every living thing from being destroyed. The gas had a singular effect on our weapons: all iron was covered with thick rust. The English now judged that they had done enough preparatory work, for suddenly drumfire started with the most terrifying effect. Shells of the heaviest calibre thundered across, with trench bombs, machine-gun volleys, and hand grenades all uniting in a blood-curdling, hellish pandemonium such as even a Danté would never be able to describe.

German nerves held out with the utmost resolution, constantly awaiting the moment when the hurricane of fire would break loose. And the storm came. In the neighbouring sector flame-throwers were turned on; against this murderous engine no measures avail. There is nothing for it but to get back into the rearward positions. And then the enemy was on us. Tank after Tank loomed forward. These monsters appeared invincible, and if one of them was hit by a heavy shell the guns and machine-guns inside were kept going unremittingly, until finally their iron hail reached our lines. And behind the Tanks came Scots and Canadians. We see nothing but endless rows of enemies. At last our reserves deliver a counter-attack. Murder breaks out afresh. All the events of history are but small episodes compared with this fury. Step by step the battle swayed backwards and forwards till gradually the enemy pressed up to the border of our old lines. The battle ebbed away, but no rest came, no relief. We had to make fresh cover before Tommy returned. Between us lay the ruins of Tanks and dead enemies in masses on each other, among them many brave comrades. The field of dead became once more a battleground.

Before the final attack on Passchendaele, Mosselmarkt and Goudberg was delivered by



STRETCHER-BEARER PARTY COMING THROUGH THE MUD. [Official photograph.]





[Australian official photo.]

#### A DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS DURING A BATTLE.

the Canadians a small preliminary operation was undertaken. In the marshy group south of the Upper Paddebeek and below Goudberg were two redoubts—Vinc Cottage and Vanity Farm. The machine-gunners in them could fire on the flank and rear of our men ascending the western slopes of the Goudberg Spur. During the very mild and windy night of November 5–6, when, after four fine days, the weather again promised to break up, a body of Canadians threaded the swamp and stormed those redoubts, capturing 40 prisoners.

The significance of this skirmish was rightly interpreted by the German Commander on the ridge, and, in anticipation of the coming attack, at 2 a.m. the enemy's guns began shelling our forward and support lines. Soon after 4 a.m. the spasmodic shelling became a veritable bombardment of our front trenches and craters. Two hours later, at 6 a.m., the Canadians jumped to their feet and made for Goudberg, Mosselmarkt and Passchendaele. They were just a minute ahead of the German barrage, the shells of which exploded harmlessly behind them, in the Paddebeek marshes, spouting up huge geysers of mud and water.

The dawn was fast breaking into half-light, clear and beautiful, and the ridge stood out from the white mist shrouding the flanks of

Bellevue and Crest Farm Spurs. With the exception of the half-ruined Passchendaele Church, and a few heaps of masonry, the summit of the ridge seemed bare. The hamlets of Goudberg and Mosselmarkt and a large part of Passchendaele had been wiped off the map by our artillery.

A narrow tongue of swampy land ran up the dip in the spur between Goudberg and Mosselmarkt. The left of the Canadians—the action was on a 2,500 yards front—was separated from the centre by this elevated morass. Beyond it the troops on the Meeteheele Spur were divided from those on Crest Farm Spur and the main ridge by the swamp of the Ravebeek. The attack was, therefore, delivered by three separate bodies, which, as the day wore on, established contact with one another on the top of the ridge. The going was bad on the left and good on the right, where the ground from Crest Farm eastwards was comparatively dry. As a consequence, the troops ascending the Goudberg Spur and making for Mosselmarkt were delayed. Nevertheless, Goudberg and Mosselmarkt, turned by the Canadians, who had by 7.15 captured Passchendaele, were soon carried. A big concrete redoubt near Mosselmarkt, defended by men of the 4th Prussian Division, had given some trouble.



but the garrison had been bombed into the open and killed, wounded, or taken prisoners.

Meantime the Canadians from Crest Farm and up the Broodseinde-Westroosebeek road had, as mentioned, burst into Passchendaele. In the concreted crypts of the church, cellars, and shell-holes the usual bloody hand-to-hand fighting had taken place; but, on the whole, the resistance encountered was slight. Two hundred or so prisoners were taken and some



[Official photograph.]

**PASSCHENDAELE CHURCH**  
After the capture of the village.

7·7 field guns. Issuing from Passchendaele, the Canadians swung to their left and joined up with their comrades round Mosselmarkt and Goudberg. At about 8 a.m. rain began to fall and continued till the evening, and at 8.50 a.m. a German counter-attack was beaten off. Towards nightfall two Prussian battalion commanders and their staffs in a "pill-box" among the ruins of Goudberg surrendered. Over 400 prisoners (including 21 officers) had been captured. A feature of the day's fighting had been our mastery of the air, a contrast to the state of things on October 30. Among the booty were immenso numbers of barrels of cement and iron and steel rods. The German Higher Command in its account of the little action on November 6 surpassed itself. It was magnified into a great battle! as the following shows:

In Flanders desperate fighting took place yesterday.\* After powerful drum-fire in the early morning English divisions advanced to the assault from Poelcappelle as far as the Yser-Roulers railway and against the heights of Becelaere and Gheluvelt. North of Passchendaele the attack collapsed in our defence fire.

The enemy penetrated into Passchendaele. In a

tough struggle the eastern portion of the village was again wrested from him. Towards mid-day the enemy brought up fresh forces into the fighting. They were only able to extend locally the point of penetration near Passchendaele. Our position runs along the eastern edge of the village.

The assault directed with strong forces against the heights of Becelaere and Gheluvelt was shattered, mostly before our lines. Such of the enemy as had penetrated were overcome in hand-to-hand fighting. Later on, the effect of our destructive fire prevented an attack which was in preparation. The strong artillery duel on the battlefield lasted until into the night.

After his defeat on November 6 Sixt von Armin regrouped his batteries on the Roulers plain and in the little valleys east of the ridge. On November 10, when British and Canadian troops astride the Passchendaele-Westroosebeek road attempted in stormy weather to progress farther on the Goudberg Spur, the British working along the western shoulder of the ridge round the sources of the Paddebeek were bombarded with the greatest severity. Covered by their barrage masses of the Germans advanced and regained some of the positions lost to us earlier in the day. But on the right the Canadians entrenched themselves successfully and were able to hold on.

At the end of July Sir Douglas Haig had started out to penetrate into Belgium, and act against the rear of the coast defences. It is quite clear that this was the correct policy, and this is confirmed by the fact that the Germans thought so, too, although they did not appear to be quite clear as to the best line for the British to advance by.

The *North German Gazette* of September 26 lays down that we intended to advance on two lines—one from Ypres, the other from Nieuport. This, of course, is absurd. Advancing along the sea coast would have been ridiculous; the space was too small between the Yser inundations and the North Sea littoral. Moreover, it would have stopped any naval attack, as our soldiers would have been exposed to the artillery fire of our sailors. It is useless to write further of so absurd a proposition. But the advance from Ypres is quite another thing, and there can be no doubt that Field-Marshal Haig had it in his mind when he began the advance on July 31. Why did he fail to carry it out? He says himself that "given a normally fine August the capture of the whole ridge within the space of a few weeks was well within the power of men who had achieved so much." Now it will be noticed that while we were universally successful in the *first* day of

\* November 6.

any operation, it was but rarely that the success was immediately followed up. It is essential under modern conditions of war that a success gained should be followed up immediately, so as to give the enemy no time to recuperate and bring up fresh reserves, more guns to replace those lost, more ammunition.\*

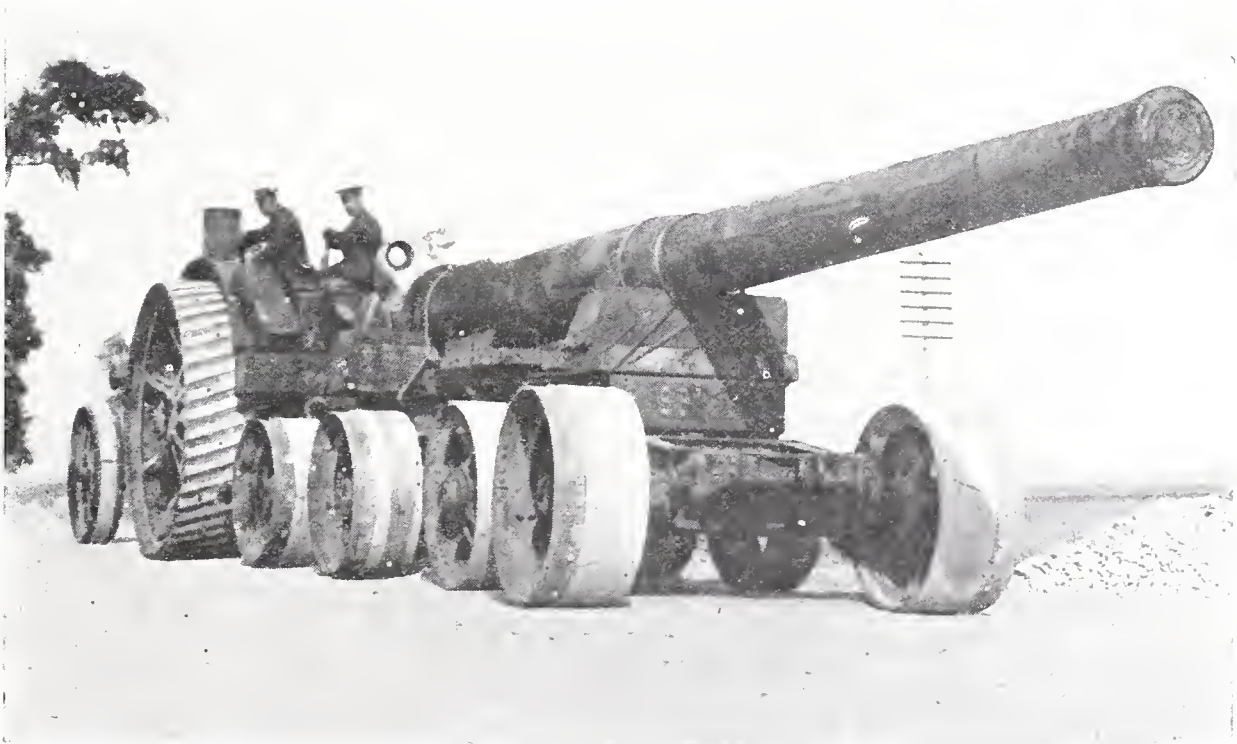
So far as supplies are concerned, the side on the defensive is the better off. It has its intact lines of railway, roads, canals, etc. On the other hand, the assailant is sure to find the means of communication of which he would fain make use have been destroyed by the retreating enemy, and that thus his progress is hindered. Strategically, the defensive side is the stronger.

On the other hand, tactically it is weaker. For so great is the power of modern guns that they can beat a hole in any defensive line. No organization of trenches can stand against it; they will be literally blown out of existence. Garrisons may be kept more or less safely in dug-outs, but they cannot fight in or from them. There are very few examples in the Great War where artillery failed to get the better of any line it battered. The reason for this superiority is a very simple one. The long range of modern guns allows them to fight over such a wide area and from such deep positions that the number of guns which can be concentrated against any point is absolutely annihilating. The perfection

of indirect fire from carefully selected and often hidden spots gave artillery an enormous increase of power, which was aided, moreover, by aeroplane observation, which can "spot" the fall of the shells. All this has made the defensive from a tactical point inferior to the offensive, and it will always be a question in any given situation whether this can be neutralized by the strategical difficulties alluded to. Great success will only be gained when it is possible to do so. In the operation under review it certainly never was.

Sir Douglas Haig stated in his dispatch of January 8 that the physical exhaustion of the men due to the weather and the resultant pauses, was the great reason why "the full fruits of each success were consequently not always obtained. Time after time the practically beaten enemy was enabled to reorganize and relieve his men and to bring up reinforcements behind the sea of mud which constituted his main protection." Yet much was accomplished from the end of July till the termination of the operations, 24,065 prisoners had been taken, besides 74 guns, 941 machine-guns, and 138 trench mortars. The British Commander-in-Chief remarked, with just pride, that "our new and hastily raised armies have shown once again that they are capable of meeting and beating the enemy's best troops." But the more training given to our men in the practical side of war the better, and Sir Douglas laid great stress on the need for giving troops

\* See *ante* page 119.



A BIG BRITISH GUN.

[Official photograph.]



before going into battle special training under the officers who were to command them in the fight. This was not always possible, and the disadvantage was increased by the difficulty of obtaining drafts to fill up casualties a sufficient length of time before the units they were allotted to were called on to fight, thus lowering the value of the troops in the firing line.

All these hindrances to success were increased by the fact that we had to take over part of the line formerly held by the French. This was doubtless unavoidable, but was certainly unfortunate. The net result of all these circumstances was that we never had sufficient

men for the enterprises undertaken. Sufficient reserves were not available to push in to follow up advantages gained.

Moreover, the failure in numbers forced Sir Douglas Haig to reduce the number of divisions holding the front in the parts of our line held defensively, and even then he had not enough for the requirements of active war. Although, therefore, the British Army gained many successes and fought on a large scale for a long time, it did not obtain results during the period under review which it might have won had circumstances been more favourable.



## CHAPTER CCXXXIX.

# NAVAL TRANSPORT AND CONVOY.

KEEPING THE OCEAN ROUTES—COMPARISON WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR—MAGNITUDE OF THE TASK—GRADUAL DESTRUCTION OF THE GERMAN MENACE—SEA PATROLS—TRANSPORT OF THE ORIGINAL EXPEDITIONARY FORCE—NAVAL ESCORTS—TRANSPORT OF COLONIAL AND FOREIGN CONTINGENTS—CONVOY AND SEARCH—SOME STRIKING RECORDS—DECEIVING THE ENEMY—DISTANT EXPEDITIONS—TRANSPORT LOSSES—GALLANTRY OF TROOPS ON BOARD—THE CONVOY SYSTEM AND SUBMARINE WAR—ITS ORGANIZATION AND SUCCESS—THE SCANDINAVIAN ROUTE—ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN—GERMAN EXPLANATIONS AND ARGUMENTS—TRANSPORT OF THE AMERICAN ARMY.

THE present chapter is a record of the way in which the ocean pathways of the world were kept open for certain military and economic purposes during the progress of the war. This work was done by the Navy of Great Britain, in conjunction with the Fleets of her Allies. Two achievements in connexion with this undertaking stood out in bold relief. One was the virtually unmolested transport of the Expeditionary Force to France, its maintenance and supply on an ever-increasing scale. The other was the equally marvellous manner in which large bodies of troops, running into millions, were conveyed across the oceans without loss at a time when several German raiding cruisers were still at work. The Navy gave to the Armies of the Allies a freedom of movement never before realized. The ubiquity of the military forces was unsurpassed. Australian troops were brought to the Near East and to France, English regiments fought in theatres as far off as East Africa and Mesopotamia, many others were conveyed to Italy or the Dardanelles, and the Allied Armies were similarly conveyed over vast distances of sea in accordance with the wishes of the military chiefs. For about three years after war began, the whole of the convoy operations were con-

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cerned with the transport of troops. The conveying of merchant ships as a recognized system came later. Then it was that methods which were common throughout the old wars were revived in order to afford protection to the seaborne food supplies of the British Isles.

To appreciate better the significance of the achievement of the seamen in regard to convoy, it is only necessary to recall the operations of this character at the time of the South African War. The transport of troops to South Africa during that campaign was the most considerable operation of the kind in which any nation had ever been engaged up to that time. Reviewing it in the *Naval Annual* for 1901, Mr. John Leyland wrote :

The distance at which the hostilities were waged, the vast numbers of men and animals employed, the huge aggregate of stores of every class to be conveyed, all demanded the resources of a merchant marine such as is possessed by no Power save our own. No other nation has ever put into the field an army of a quarter of a million men, with lines of communications covering 7,000 miles of sea and land, provided with horses, transport animals, field and siege guns, ammunition, wagons, vehicles, traction-engines, bridge-building, pontooning, and telegraph materials, and tents, tools, and equipments, as well as with food, forage, and hospitals, not to speak of the thousands of objects that are necessary for the efficiency and the operations of forces in the field.

It was not merely in magnitude that the transport achievement of the war which began





CONVOYING A MERCHANTMAN.



in August, 1914, exceeded by many times that of the South African campaign. There was another vital difference. From the strategic standpoint, the naval transport operations in 1899-1902 were simplified owing to the fact that Great Britain was not at war with a sea Power. Apart from a general patrol of the route to South Africa, no special precautions were necessary. In the war with Germany and her Allies, Great Britain had to reckon with the second strongest naval Power in the world. The ocean pathways were menaced by new and deadly devices unknown, as reliable weapons of war, at the beginning of the century. Moreover, there was not a single theatre of military operations, but something like a dozen had to be provided for at various times. Small wonder, then, that the achievement of the sailor in "carrying the soldier on his back" should be regarded as marvellous, compelling the admiration of all who care to examine the details of the undertaking.

In the pages which follow there is described the progress of this gigantic business of sea transport and convoy. First, the British Fleet had to carry across the Channel, in the teeth of the German High Sea Fleet and all its satellites at Wilhelmshaven, the original Expeditionary Force. The story of that achievement was inspiring enough, but it was surpassed by later efforts. Then there was the bringing home to Europe of the troops from the oversea garrisons, and the provision of reliefs for them from the Territorial Army. The Dominion contingents and the Indian regiments were also conveyed in safety to the ports from which they were required to be disembarked to join in the fighting.

Speaking of the transport undertakings during the first six months of war, Mr. Churchill, then First Lord, said on February 15, 1915 :—

The command of the sea which we have thus enjoyed has not only enabled our trade to be carried on practically without interruption or serious disturbance, but we have been able to move freely about the world very large numbers of troops. . . . I am going to give the House a figure which has no military significance because so many uncertain factors are comprised within the total, but which is an absolutely definite figure so far as the work of the Admiralty Transport Department is concerned. We have now moved by sea, at home and abroad, including wounded brought back from the front, including Belgian wounded, including Belgian and French troops, moved here and there as circumstances required, often at the shortest possible notice, with constant changes of plan, across oceans threatened by the enemy's cruisers and across channels haunted by

submarines, to and from India and Egypt, from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, China, South Africa, from every fortress and Possession under the Crown, approximately 1,000,000 men without, up to the present, any accident or loss of life. . . .

Over and above the work performed by the Fleet in the actual duty of transport during this first part of the war, the nation had cause for gratitude to its seamen as a whole for the splendid state of efficiency in which the declaration of hostilities found them. Why did not Germany deliver an attack in force on the high seas at the very beginning? Not only would that have been her most favourable moment for such a stroke, but such action might certainly have prevented or delayed the dispatch of an army to the Continent. That she did not do so can only have been due to the consciousness that the power and efficiency of the British Fleet were too great to be challenged. Under the sure shield of the Grand Fleet, therefore, the vast transport operations described in these pages were permitted to continue.

In what may be called the second phase of the war, after the first German advance on land had been checked, the strength of the British Mercantile Marine and the satisfactory arrangements made by the Admiralty to protect it gave rise to expeditions which many people considered unwise and imprudent. At the time of the South African War Sir Thomas Sutherland assured the shareholders of the P. & O. Company at the annual meeting in June, 1900, that the strength of the Mercantile Marine of Great Britain had not nearly been put out by the campaign, considerable as the work had been, and he asserted that if it were ever necessary for the great resources of the Mercantile Marine to be seriously drawn upon in the defence of the country, they would produce much greater results even than the great efficiency which had been displayed in connexion with the transport of the South African expedition. The events of 1915 showed the force of this statement. Vast calls were made upon the shipping of the country for military expeditions to the Dardanelles, Egypt, West and South-West Africa, and Salonika. These calls were met to the full without any serious disturbance of the seaborne trade and food supplies of the Empire. There were those who would have preferred it otherwise, their view being that the ease with which large military forces were conveyed to distant theatres tended to a dispersion of effort which was bad strategy. However this may be, it was



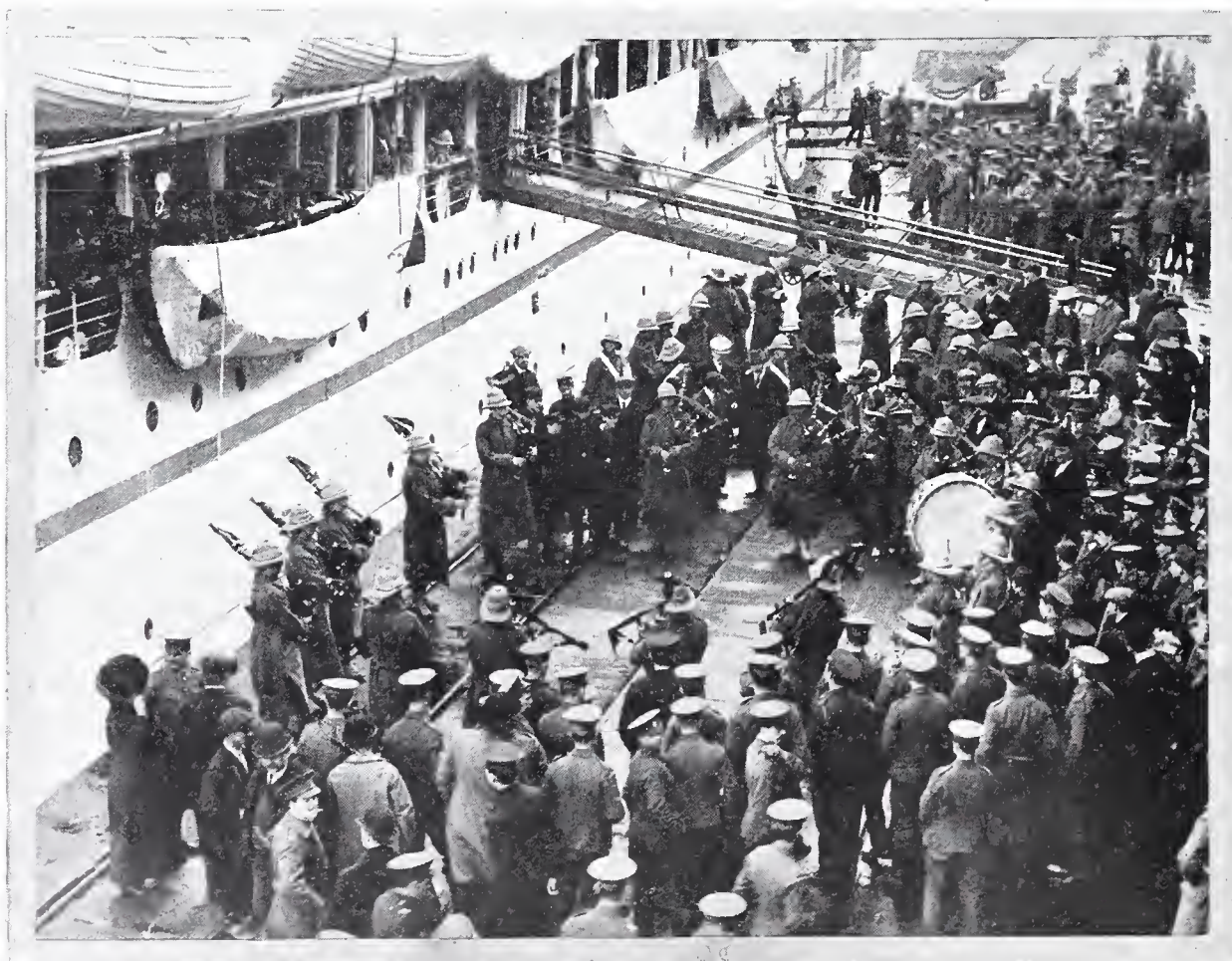
certain that every soldier sent out of Great Britain indefinitely locked up a proportion of the carrying tonnage of the Empire. This tonnage was needed first to convey him to his destination, and then to keep him supplied with all the materials and equipment for war, to bring him back if wounded, and to convey his relief. It was not until a later period, when the serious depredations of enemy submarines began to make themselves felt, that the vital importance to the nation of carrying tonnage was realized, and the necessity for keeping down the proportion ear-marked for military requirements was appreciated.

There were many and urgent calls upon the Admiralty to provide transport and convoy for the Allied Powers. The Russian Armies had to be supplied with shells and equipment by sea *via* Archangel. The transport of French troops from Africa across the Mediterranean, and the dispatch of an Italian expeditionary force to Valona, were both assisted by the work of British naval forces in the Mediterranean and Adriatic. Similarly, the transport of the remnant of the Serbian Army from Albania was

an undertaking accomplished with much success by the Allied seamen concerned. On the other hand, the Japanese and American Navies, a little later on, lent valuable aid in regard to transport and convoy work. Japan sent destroyers to assist in the protection of Allied shipping in the Mediterranean, while the first call upon the United States Navy was for small craft to provide escorts for transports and supply ships. The safe conveyance of the first contingent of United States troops to Europe during 1917 was an excellent illustration of the sea power of the Allies.

To the burden, already great beyond all precedent, of providing escorts for the shipping taken up for military purposes there was added the task of improvizing means of defence against the submarines.

It was announced by the Admiralty on October 24, 1914, that there were about 70 Allied cruisers engaged at one time in patrolling and searching for the eight or nine German raiding cruisers known to be at large in the Atlantic, the Pacific, and Indian Oceans. The vast expanses of sea and ocean and the many thousand islands of the archipelagos offered an



DEPARTURE OF SCOTS GUARDS FOR EGYPT.

The pipers playing on the quay before embarking.



*(By courtesy of the Ministry of Information.)*

A TRANSPORT LANDING THE 29th PUNJABIS AT KILINDINI HARBOUR,  
EAST AFRICA.

almost infinite choice of movements to these enemy vessels, and their discovery and destruction was therefore "largely a matter of time, patience, and good luck." Much more difficult was the problem of seeking out and destroying the submarines which haunted the trade routes and frequented the tracks of the troopships. The early oversea raiders needed for the carrying on of their work the support of a strong force such as existed in the Asiatic Squadron of the German Navy under Admiral Count von Spee. This fact was exemplified in the manner in which the raiders did no more damage, but gradually faded away, after the decisive victory of Admiral Sturdee off the Falkland Islands, which annihilated the supporting squadron of cruisers under cover of which the *Emden*, *Karlsruhe*, *Dresden* and other vessels had been raiding.\* But the submarine needed no such supporting force of surface vessels. Her power of submersion compensated for this, and instead of falling back upon her main squadron when pursued, she proceeded under water and remained there until the immediate danger had passed.

The early submarines with which Germany

began the war did not constitute a very serious menace. It was the improved boats which were speedily constructed in large numbers from the beginning of 1915 onwards which caused the trouble. At the end of 1914 it was considered remarkable if a U boat could penetrate into the English Channel through the Dover Straits, or make the passage round the north of Scotland. A year later, and there were boats in commission able to travel to the Mediterranean, and so active were they in that sea that the steamship routes were diverted round the Cape instead of by way of the Suez Canal. In October, 1916, a German submarine was sinking ships off the United States Atlantic coast, and in the following year Sir Edward Carson admitted as First Lord that mines had been strewn as far away as the Cape of Good Hope and Bombay.

One instance of many may be quoted here as typical of the difficulties overcome. For the transfer of the Serbian Army from Corfu, after a period of rest and recuperation, to Salonika, the Anglo-French convoys made no less than 57 voyages between the two points. So efficient were the arrangements made for this gigantic and difficult operation, however, that

\* See Vol. III., p. 134.





YACHT PATROL ESCORTING BRITISH TRANSPORTS.

not a single ship was lost, nor was a single enemy submarine able to press home an attack. The protecting warcraft were skilfully disposed to deal with any attacking force, and before the transports sailed vast sweeping operations along the route to be traversed had to be undertaken.

The original methods of providing protection against the submarines included the keeping of certain "safe" areas by a system of patrols. These protected zones into which ships could run were very valuable, but there was a limit to their utility. The destruction of the *Lusitania* tended to illustrate the weakness of this method. The submarines took to lurking off the Allied ports, or about the routes taken by the traffic, and attacking ships one by one. The merchant vessels were free to choose their own times of departure, speed, etc., and (within the limits of the areas known to be dangerous to navigation) their own route and course. After a time experience showed that it was better to group the merchantmen together and give each group protection against submarine attack. This meant delay and inconvenience, but it was safer in the long run. When the ships were scattered the submarines were able to scatter, too, and attack as they pleased. But when the ships sailed in convoys the submarines had to find the convoys in order to secure any victims, and in finding the merchant ships they also came up against their most deadly assailants, the destroyers and patrol boats.

This convoy system at length constituted, as might have been expected, a bait to the German forces other than submarines. The escort provided was sufficient to deal with under-water craft, but not with surface raiders. Consequently when, in October, 1917, two fast

and heavily-armed German cruisers fell upon a convoy in the North Sea mid-way between Norway and the Shetlands, they were able to sink the two destroyers accompanying the vessels, and nine ships in the convoy. This action was repeated later, and again with success, and the need became apparent for the presence within steaming distance of the likely points of attack of supporting forces of cruisers able to bring the enemy to action before he could regain his ports. These conditions recalled those which obtained in the days of the old wars, when great fleet actions were sometimes brought on by convoy incidents. The *Glorious First of June* in 1794 was a victory which arose out of the necessity of affording protection to a convoy. Our ancestors had often to employ not only frigates, but even ships of the line as escort if the smaller vessels were in danger of being overwhelmed. At the same time, only in very favourable circumstances did success attend the raiders, and in the twentieth century the advance of science conferred great benefits upon the stronger fleet, notably as regards means of communication.

Most interesting was the development of aircraft for convoy purposes, by the aid of which many precious ships and equally precious cargoes were saved for the country. In September, 1917, for example, during which month a total distance of 90,000 miles was covered by seaplanes on patrol and 80,000 miles by airships, it was reported that several hundreds of ships had been convoyed by aircraft, and in no single instance had a submarine dared attack a ship while under aircraft escort. The French Navy also made great use of small airships and seaplanes for convoy purposes. From the height at which they worked these

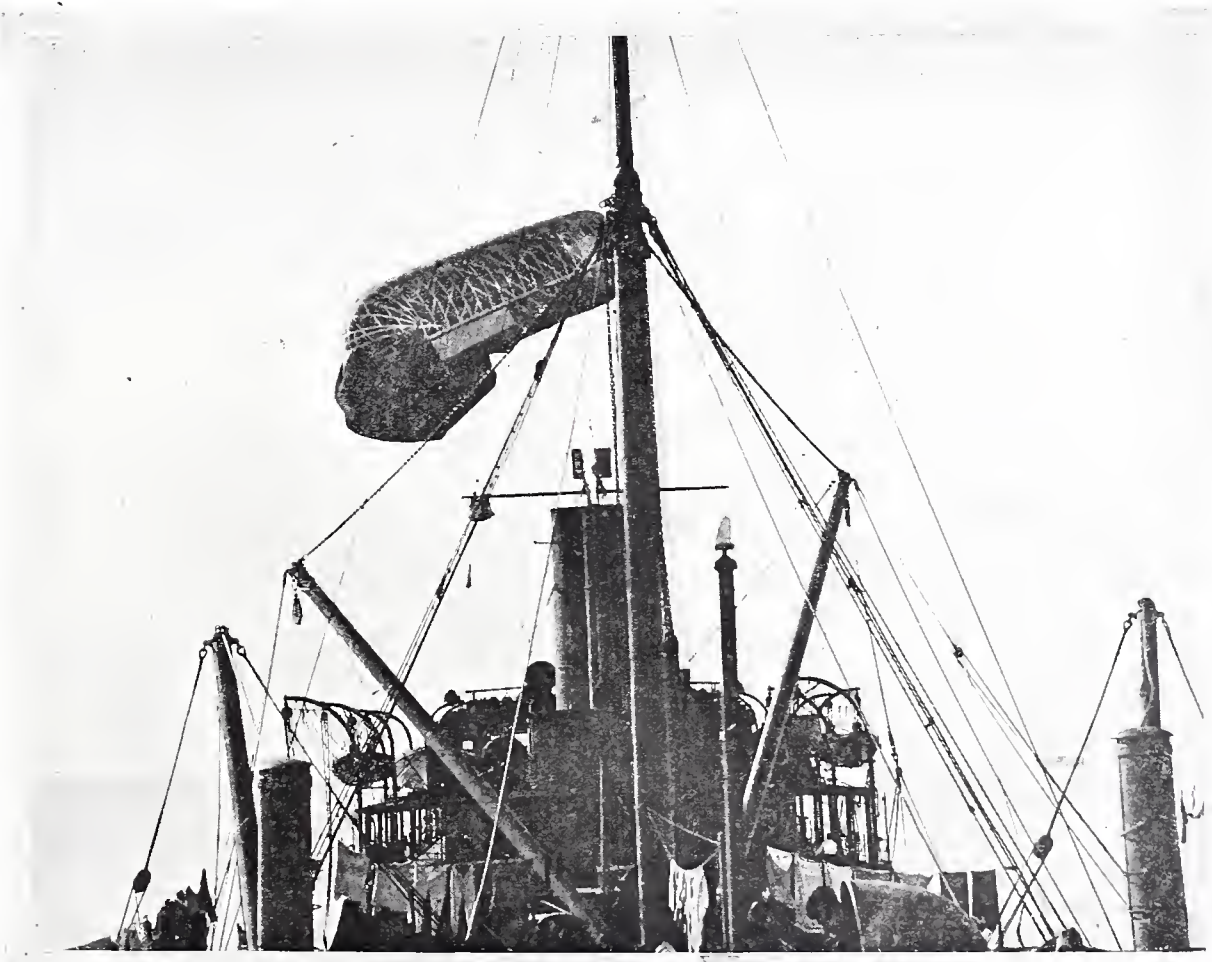
machines were able to spot the presence of a submarine under water when it would have been impossible for her to have been seen from the deck or masthead of a ship. Once detected, the U boat would be overtaken and kept in touch with until a favourable moment for the discharge of bombs which would destroy or disable her. A third class of aircraft, utilized with good effect, was the kite-balloon which worked in conjunction with patrol craft. The method was to run up one of these balloons to the required height, attached by cable to a winch on the deck of the boat, where also was a telephone operator ready to receive the fruits of the observation of the officer aloft. Keeping watch ahead of a convoy a balloon observer could detect not only submarines, but also any mines which might have been strewn by a U boat since the area had been last covered by the mine-sweepers.

In the War Cabinet Report for the year 1917 tribute was paid to the Navy in connexion with its incessant struggle to guard the lines of communication. No task it was ever

called upon to perform demanded more exacting toil and devotion or higher technical skill. The record of work done showed what a tremendous feat had been accomplished, a feat which constituted one of the brilliant achievements of the war :

There had been transported overseas up to the end of August—the last date for which complete statistics are available—some 13 million human beings—combatants, wounded, medical personnel, refugees, prisoners, etc. ; 2 million horses and mules ; half a million vehicles ; 25 million tons of explosives and supplies for the Army ; and also some 51 million tons of coal and oil fuel for the use of our fleets, our armies, and to meet the needs of our Allies. The losses in personnel, out of the 13 million men who have been transported, amount to only about 3,500, in spite of the isolated and unpreventable mishaps which occur occasionally. It is a figure which speaks for itself. Of these 3,500 casualties, about 2,700 were caused by the action of the enemy (and it must be noted that this number includes 542 in hospital ships), while the remaining losses occurred through the ordinary perils of the sea.

About 567 steamers of approximately 1½ million tons are continually employed in the service of carrying troops and stores to the Armies in France and to the forces in various theatres of war in the East. When the vast number of voyages entailed by these operations is considered, some idea will be gained of the organization that is required to ensure efficient and smooth working, and also of the calls that are made upon the Navy for safe conducts. When, further, the almost



[Official photograph.]

THE BALLOON-SHIP CANNING :  
An observation balloon ascending.



insignificant losses are examined, it will be realized that not only this country, but also our Allies, owe much to the British Navy in association with the transport services.

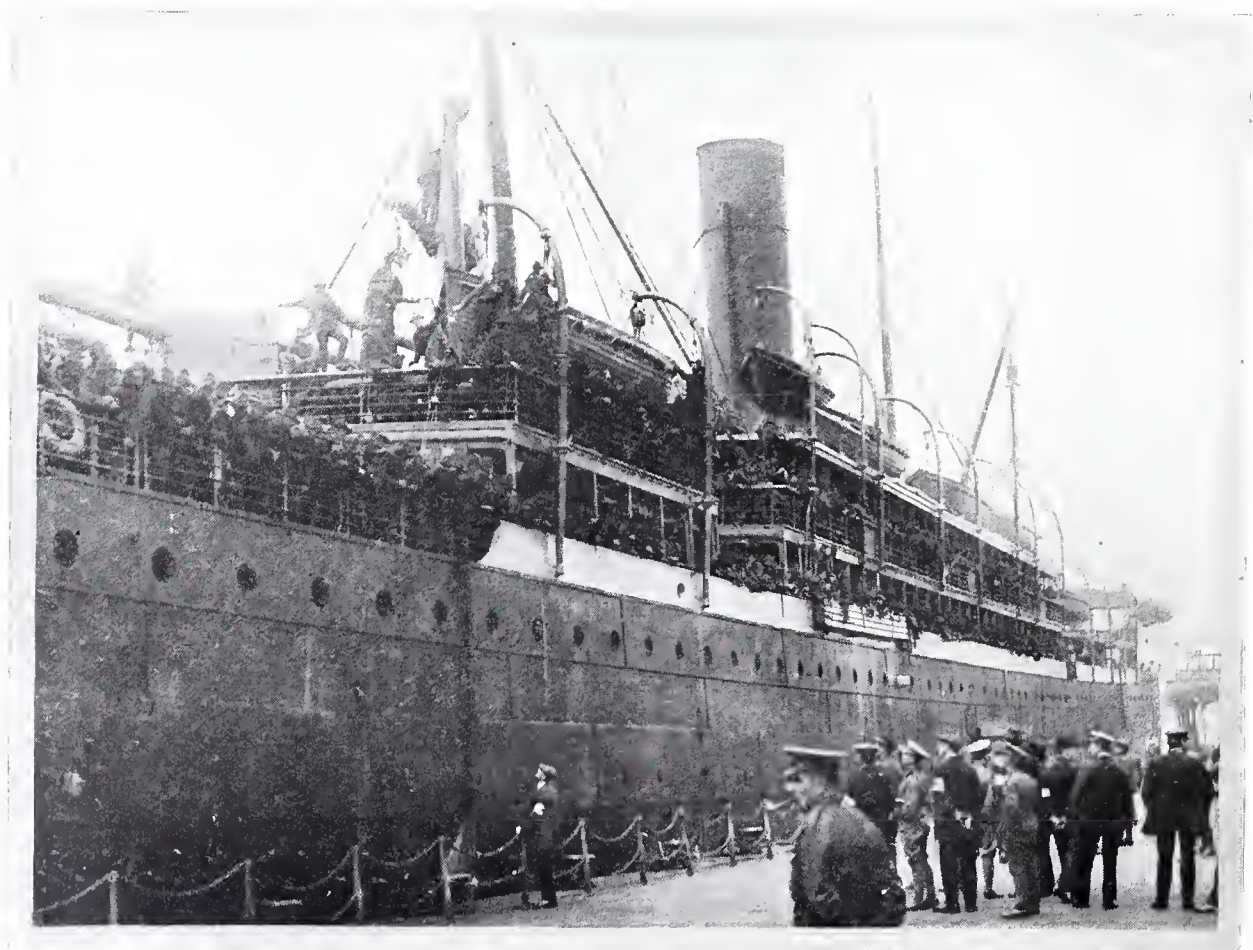
The safe conduct of the British Expeditionary Force across the Channel in August, 1914, swiftly, secretly, and secure from mishap or molestation, must be regarded as one of the most remarkable and successful events of the whole war. The landing of such a force on the Continent within about a fortnight of the declaration of hostilities surprised even the Germans. It had always been held by naval students that no Power should attempt to pass troops oversea until the enemy's fleet had either been defeated or contained and bottled up in its own harbours. Neither of these things had been achieved before the British transports began to cross the Channel. It was not unprecedented that a military force should cross the sea while the command in the neighbouring waters was still incompletely assured, but it would be difficult indeed to find a parallel to such an operation, especially one carried out as this was within a comparatively few hours of the opening of hostilities. The British Admiralty, however, accepted the responsibility and its attendant risks, and were completely justified by the

outcome of the undertaking. The condition precedent was the protection of the Channel from German attack, and the sole guarantee for this was the precautionary measure which ensured that the Grand Fleet was at the right strength in the right place at the right moment.

An explanation is to be found in the 10 years' preparation against the danger of war with Germany which was inspired by and largely executed under the orders of Lord Fisher. The Fleet, reorganized and redistributed with this sole issue in view, was promptly mobilized by his successor, and even before the declaration of war was dispatched to a base already selected for use if the situation should arise. Other measures to fit the strategic conception were taken at the same time. Thus Germany found, when the moment came for action, that she had been robbed of the initiative at sea.\* It was this circumstance which virtually decided the subsequent course of events. The defensive attitude which the German Fleet was forced to adopt in view of the admirable arrangements for "offensive defence," carried out unhesitatingly in the North Sea and the Narrows beyond the

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\* See Vol. I., p. 53.



ARRIVAL OF A NEW ZEALAND CONTINGENT IN ENGLAND.





NURSES FROM NEW ZEALAND LANDING IN ENGLAND.

Straits of Dover, made possible the unimpeded transport to the Continent of the striking force of the British Army, and provided for the safe passage of its reinforcements and a continuous stream of supplies. Although the sea journey was a short one, a matter of some 50 miles or less, the operation was difficult and arduous, and not without grave risk. Yet, as the results showed, the authorities did not over-estimate the influence of a Fleet proved to be so efficient and well-prepared, and they were able to get to France the military help of which she was in need possibly more quickly and more effectively than she expected or hoped.

The speedy appearance of the British Army on the Western Front affected the whole character of the struggle. The effort necessary to place our troops so quickly in the field was not thrown away. These pages have already shown to what magnificent purpose the first few divisions under Field-Marshal French intervened in the struggle. There have been opinions expressed as to alternatives which might have been tried both as regards time and place for the entry of the British Army into the fighting. No one could possibly belittle, however, the glorious achievement of the troops from Mons onwards, nor question the decisive effect which

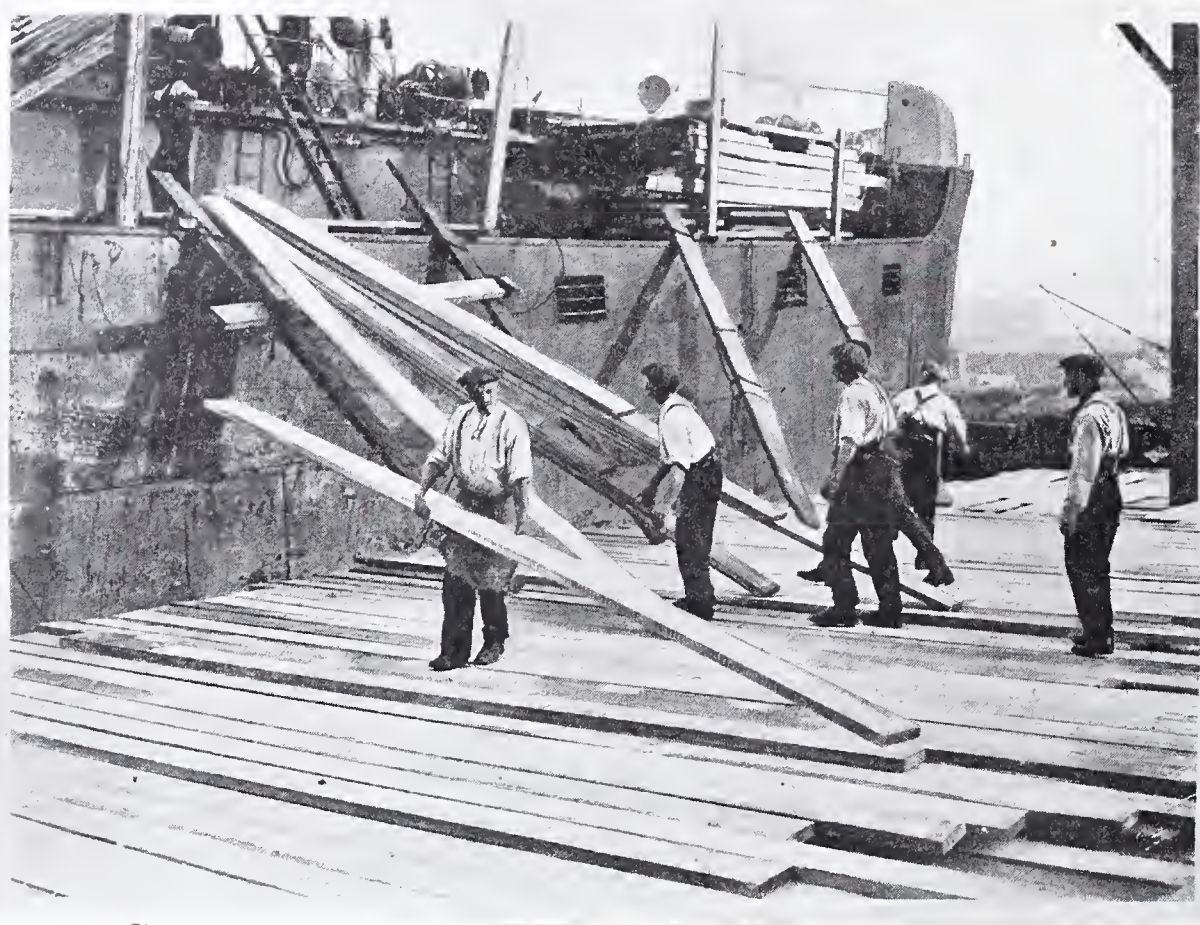
their stand against the German hordes had upon the progress of the war. Once again the military arm of an island Power was exhibited as the spear-point of an invincible Navy. The soldiers were able to achieve what they did because the sailors had done, and were doing, all that was necessary to keep open their lines of sea communications. If Paris was saved on the Marne the seamen made the Marne possible. Sea strength exerted its influence over land areas in the shape of a military force, small indeed, but a weapon of the highest temper.

It is yet too soon after the event to tell the whole story of the passing of the original Expeditionary Force from England to France. Some details of the move by rail in this country\* were given by Sir H. A. Walker in a speech at the American Luncheon Club on November 13, 1914. He said :—

The Government gave the railways a time-limit of 60 hours to make ready for dispatch to Southampton, the port of departure for the Expeditionary Force, 350 trains of, roundly, 30 vehicles each. We "delivered the goods," as you Americans would say, in 48 hours. At Southampton, for practically every day of the first three weeks of the war, we handled during a period of 14 hours no fewer than 73 of these trains, including the running of them to the boat side and the unloading of the full equipment of guns, ammunition, and horses.

\* See Vol. VI., p. 184.





[Naval official photograph.]

## UNLOADING AND STACKING TIMBER AT A DOCK.

The trains arrived at intervals averaging 12 minutes. It was a matter of special pride to all the railwaymen concerned—and we general managers give credit for the feat to the efficiency of our disciplined staffs—that practically every train, without exception, came in on scheduled time. Some of them came from remote parts of the Kingdom—Wales and the North of Scotland.

Similarly, in speaking at the annual general meeting of the London and South Western Railway on February 23, 1915, Mr. Hugh W Drummond said that up to December, 1914, their traffic department had had to make arrangements for the running of no less than 4,913 special trains. Taking into account the running of the empty trains necessitated by this heavy movement, they had a total of nearly 15,000 special trains provided by the company for the naval and military authorities. This was quite apart from the enormous number of soldiers and sailors whose conveyance had had to be arranged for in the ordinary train service, and also the large number of special trains that had to be run with stores and provisions.

The operations on land were on such a huge scale that it was difficult to realize all that was involved in sea transportation. It was officially stated in the War Cabinet Report for the year 1917 that over 7,000 personnel were transported, and more than 30,000 tons of stores and supplies had to be imported daily into

France for the maintenance of the Army. The daily conveyances to France of the military effectives of the Allied forces, medical personnel, men returning from leave, horses, vehicles, explosives, supplies, etc., from the early days of the war up to the end of 1917, employed from 17 to 30 ships, of from about 35,000 to 55,000 aggregate tons. The highest number in one day in an average month was 53 ships of 84,500 tons. Naturally, all, or the greater part, of these vessels came back again, for there were officers and men travelling on leave, or duty, refugees, prisoners of war, and much else to be brought to England.

In one month of five weeks, the figures for which may be regarded as typical of most others, the embarkations for the Continent amounted approximately to 3,850 officers, 99,500 other ranks, 19,900 horses and mules, 300 nurses and medical staff, many thousands of British troops returning from leave, as well as a very large number of Indian and Allied soldiers carried to France. In tonnage, the quantity of wood amounted approximately to 37,159, forage to 47,800, medical supplies to 1,800, ammunition to 20,413, explosives to 2,640, and large quantities of petrol, fuel, and oils. In addition, the tonnages of guns,



vehicles, cycles, ambulances, other motors, lorries, travelling kitchens and the like ran into many thousands. There were also supplies of fire engines, vehicles for telegraphic work, motor 'buses, aeroplanes and all the engines needed for trench warfare. Machinery was also transported for engineers, artillerists, etc.; clothing, saddlery, entrenching tools and various other articles of equipment were carried; together with railway materials, rolling stock, horse stores, barbed wire, and other goods too numerous to mention. The figures mentioned will give some idea of the volume of traffic in the Channel Ferry.

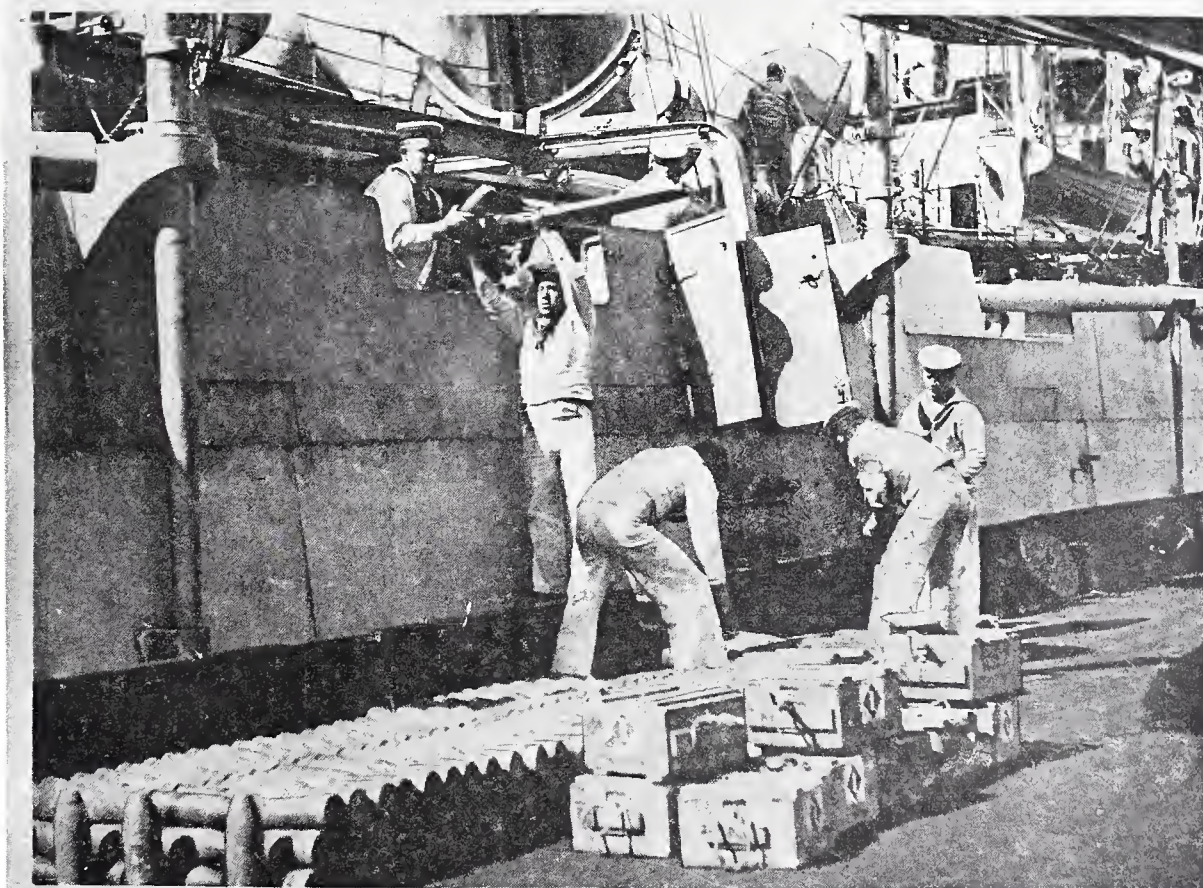
The number of voyages made depended largely upon the carrying power of the ships and the facilities of the ports for loading and discharging. As time went on the numbers of the ferries nearly doubled, while the work thrown upon the latter, particularly on the outbreak of war, was tremendous, but all demands and requirements were met without serious difficulty, or hindrance of the military traffic.

In the early part of 1918, when a call came for a supreme effort, the Admiralty transported across the Channel, for strengthening our Army in France, a body of nearly a quarter of a million troops in 10 days—a really marvellous

performance and probably one unexampled among the many triumphs of the Channel Ferry.

Perhaps the greatest menace to the shipping was that from mines. These machines were dropped indiscriminately by submarines specially fitted, of which a large number of small boats were known to be at work. Several mines were also being constantly washed down from the large fields in the North Sea, from which they had broken loose during the tides and gales. The chief hope of safety against these deadly devices lay in constant sweeping by the trawlers and drifters. These were always at work, never ceasing in their efforts to keep safe the pathways used by their brethren of the land service to and from France.

With regard to the protection of the shipping operations in the Channel, the success achieved is illustrated by the comparative freedom from mishap. The escorts furnished by the Navy proved efficient and satisfactory. In no case during the period of 3½ years covered by this record was an Allied transport sunk in the Channel by enemy action apart from mines or submarines. From October, 1916, onwards the Germans made several raids by fast, powerful torpedo craft through the Dover Straits with the object of holding up the flow of



TAKING IN AMMUNITION.



men and munitions to France, but they were defeated in this object. The nearest they got to success was on the first raid of the kind on October 26, 1916,\* when the empty passenger transport *Queen* was sunk, and even she would have been saved if her captain had realized that she could have remained afloat for six hours. Eventually, the Germans paid for their temerity more than once, and these "tip-and-run raids" into the Narrows ceased. So, too, with the submarine raiders. On March 5, in introducing his first Navy Estimates in the House of Commons, Sir Eric Geddes said:—"In the Dover Straits (where many people erroneously believed that netting prevented the passage of submarines) a surface barrage had for some months been maintained day and night. Before the adoption of this vigorous policy, a considerable number of enemy underwater craft undoubtedly passed through." Similarly, the Air Force played its part in helping to keep secure the sea passage to the battlefields of France and Flanders. On October 3, 1914, it was officially stated that

While the Expeditionary Force was being moved abroad a strong patrol to the eastward of the Straits of Dover was undertaken by both seaplanes and airships of the Royal Naval Air Service. The airships remained steadily patrolling between the French and English coasts, sometimes for 12 hours on end; while

farther to the east, with the assistance of the Belgian authorities, a temporary seaplane base was established at Ostend, and a patrol kept up with seaplanes between this place and the English coast opposite. By this means it was impossible for the enemy's ships to approach the Straits without being seen for very many miles.

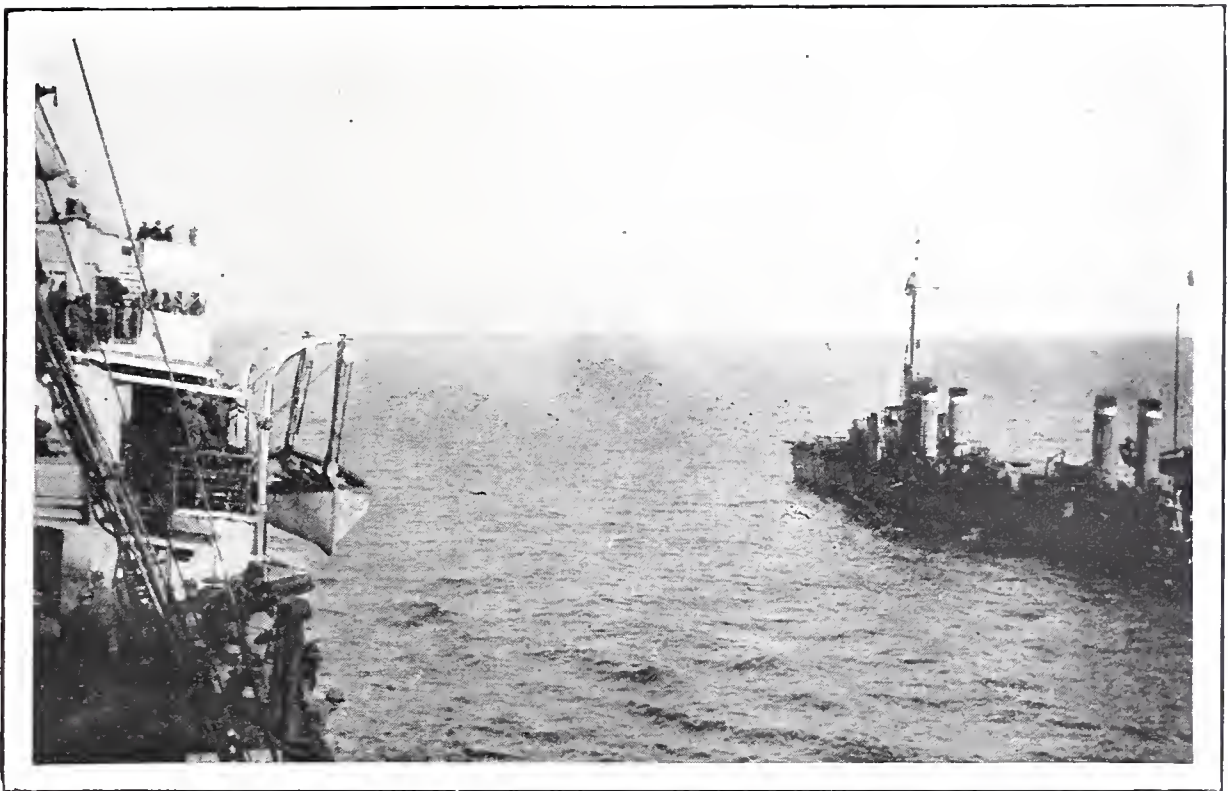
As a matter of historical record, it should be stated here that the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Infantry Divisions and a cavalry division were the first troops to be embarked; these being followed on August 23, 1914, by the 4th Division. The foregoing were the British forces engaged up to the close of the Battle of the Marne. To them were added subsequently the 6th Division, which embarked on September 7 and became available on the 16th; the 7th Division, which embarked at the end of September and was landed at Zeebrugge and Ostend; the 2nd Cavalry Division, which also disembarked in Belgium with the 7th Division; the 8th Division and the Indian Corps, of which the first units were not available for employment until October 27.

It was a far cry from the Army of those early days of the war, splendid though it was, to the mighty force which had been created two, three, and four years later. As the Army grew, so the Navy and the Merchant Service kept pace with its ever-expanding requirements, and what the soldiers thought of all that their comrades of the sea Services had done for them was well expressed by Sir

\* See Vol. X., p. 55.



LANDING CAMELS.



DESTROYER ESCORTING A FRENCH TROOPSHIP.

Douglas Haig in his dispatch published in the *London Gazette* on January 18, 1918, when he said :

The debt which the Army owes to the Navy grows ever greater as the years pass, and is deeply realized by all ranks of the British Armies in France. As the result of unceasing vigilance of the Navy, the enemy's hope that his policy of unrestricted submarine warfare would hamper our operations in France and Flanders has been most signally disappointed. The immense quantities of ammunition and material required by the Army, and the large numbers of men sent to us as drafts, continue to reach us with unfailing regularity.

After the passage of the Expeditionary Force to France, the next big undertaking to which the Admiralty had to turn their attention was the bringing home of the Colonial and foreign contingents of the Army. These had to be transported across many thousand miles of sea from several different stations, and the arrangement of the necessary shipping involved a good deal of careful organizing. One of the earliest moves of this character was the return of troops from Malta and other Mediterranean garrisons. The War Office notified on August 26, 1914, that ships were required to bring home three battalions from Malta, and one battalion from Gibraltar, with various details, and four vessels were allotted for the former purpose and one for the latter. On September 4 the Transport Department were notified that it was desired to bring home the 1st Battalion Suffolk Regiment from Khartoum,

and the company then in Cyprus. This meant the selection of a fifth vessel. Various other changes in the plans resulted in two vessels being allocated for the Gibraltar troops. On September 10, 1914, the Gloucester Castle and Ultonia left that place, arriving at Southampton on the 15th. They were escorted by the cruiser Sulej. More interesting was the voyage of the Malta transports, which sailed on September 14, in that they were escorted for a part of their journey by French warships.

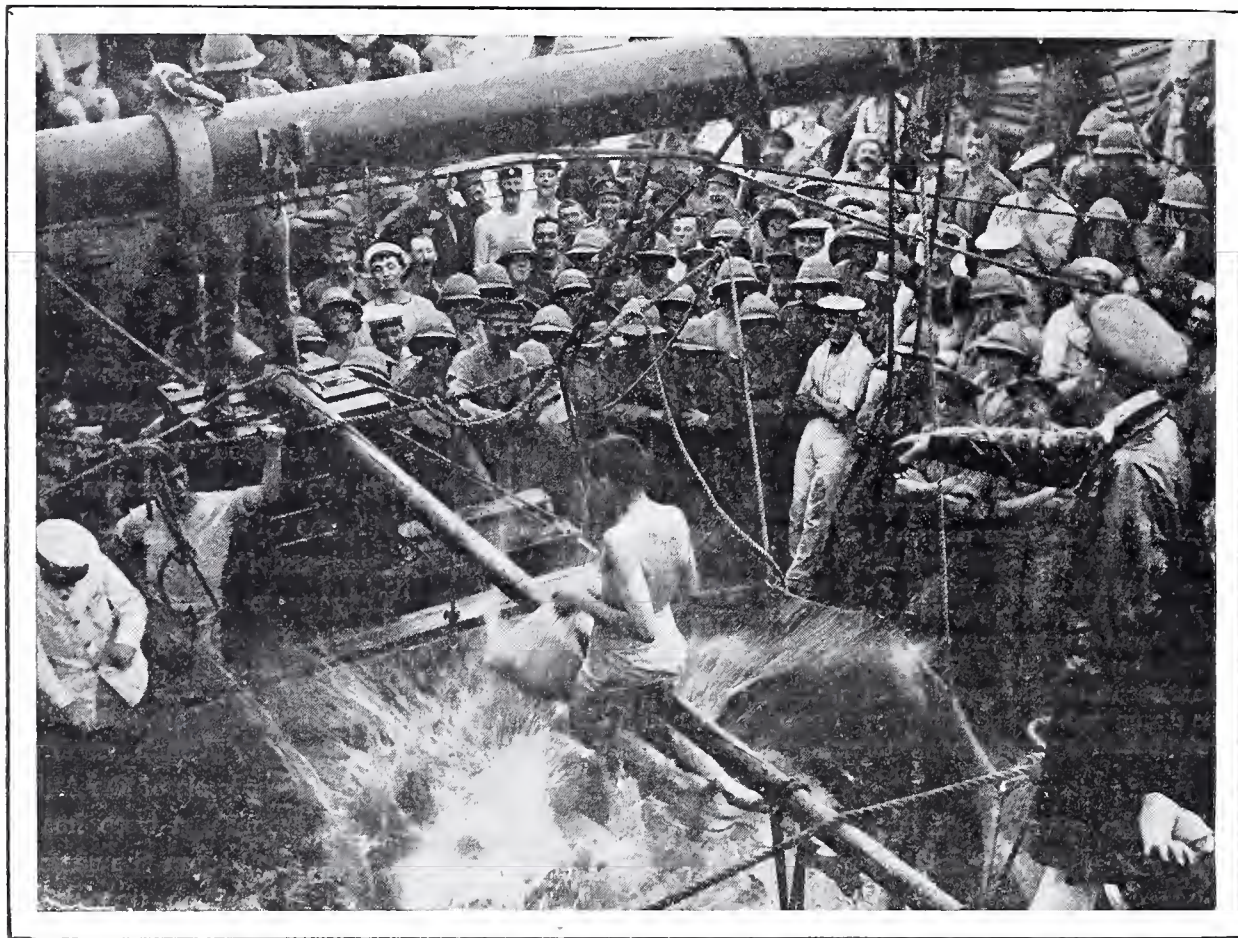
At first the demands for vessels of the Allied Navies to escort the troopships were heavy indeed. The strain imposed upon the seamen was very great, and it was no uncommon thing for the services of a cruiser to be demanded in three or four places at once. In September, 1914, the Egyptian garrison was preparing to come home, and four merchant vessels had been detailed for the purpose. On the 26th this convoy was advised that the French battleships Charlemagne and St. Louis—two of the best-known vessels of the French Navy—would form the escort, but on the same date one of them was deputed to accompany the convoy carrying the 9th Indian Brigade to Marseilles. The British battleship Ocean took the convoy from Gibraltar, and was relieved by the Implacable. It was on September 30 that the Egyptian garrison, including two battalions of infantry and the Third Dragoon Guards, left Alexandria, and Liver-



pool was reached on October 16. Two French cruisers and two French destroyers provided the escort for the first part of the journey. For the return from Khartoum of the Suffolks, already referred to, the *Grantully Castle* was chosen, but she was forbidden to sail from Port Sudan without escort, and the British destroyer *Mosquito*, which later on rendered good service at the Dardanelles, was deputed to act.

As with Egypt, so with South Africa. The initiation of the movement for the return of the troops from the Cape and Mauritius may be considered as coincident with the outbreak

Field Artillery had been omitted from the estimate, and as some 400 Army Reserve men had been added to the numbers requiring transport, a fifth vessel was allocated. The convoy was subsequently increased to six ships upon the decision to send home the 10th Hussars. Escorted by the British cruisers *Hyacinth* and *Astræa*, of the Cape Squadron, the convoy sailed on August 27. Its slowest ship was the *Goorkha*, which had a speed of 12 knots, but in a telegram received from the armoured cruiser *Leviathan*, which joined the convoy after leaving Cape Town, it was stated



CROSSING THE LINE: THE CEREMONY ON A BRITISH TRANSPORT.

of war on August 4, 1914, since the first inquiry in regard to the necessary transport was received on August 6th. By September 19 the bulk of the convoy had arrived at Southampton. The smoothness and celerity with which the arrangements were completed have been ascribed to: (1) The absence of countermanding orders from the War Office, except in a few minor instances not entailing delay; (2) the early notification received from the G.O.C.-in-C. in South Africa (on August 8) that the troops were ready to be embarked; and (3) the efficient organization of the Union Castle Company. Four ships were at first selected. Then it was found that a Brigade of

that a speed of only nine knots was being maintained. From Mauritius the *Elelo* was detailed to bring home various units and a cargo of 3,100 tons of sugar. After waiting in vain for an escort, she had permission to sail without one to Aden, and thence to Suez and Gibraltar under the same conditions, but between Gibraltar and Devonport the cruisers patrolling the route were instructed respecting her movements.

An instance of the uncertainty attaching to shipping in the Atlantic in the early days of the war is afforded by the cancelling of arrangements made for bringing home troops from Jamaica and Sierra Leone. A request to pro-

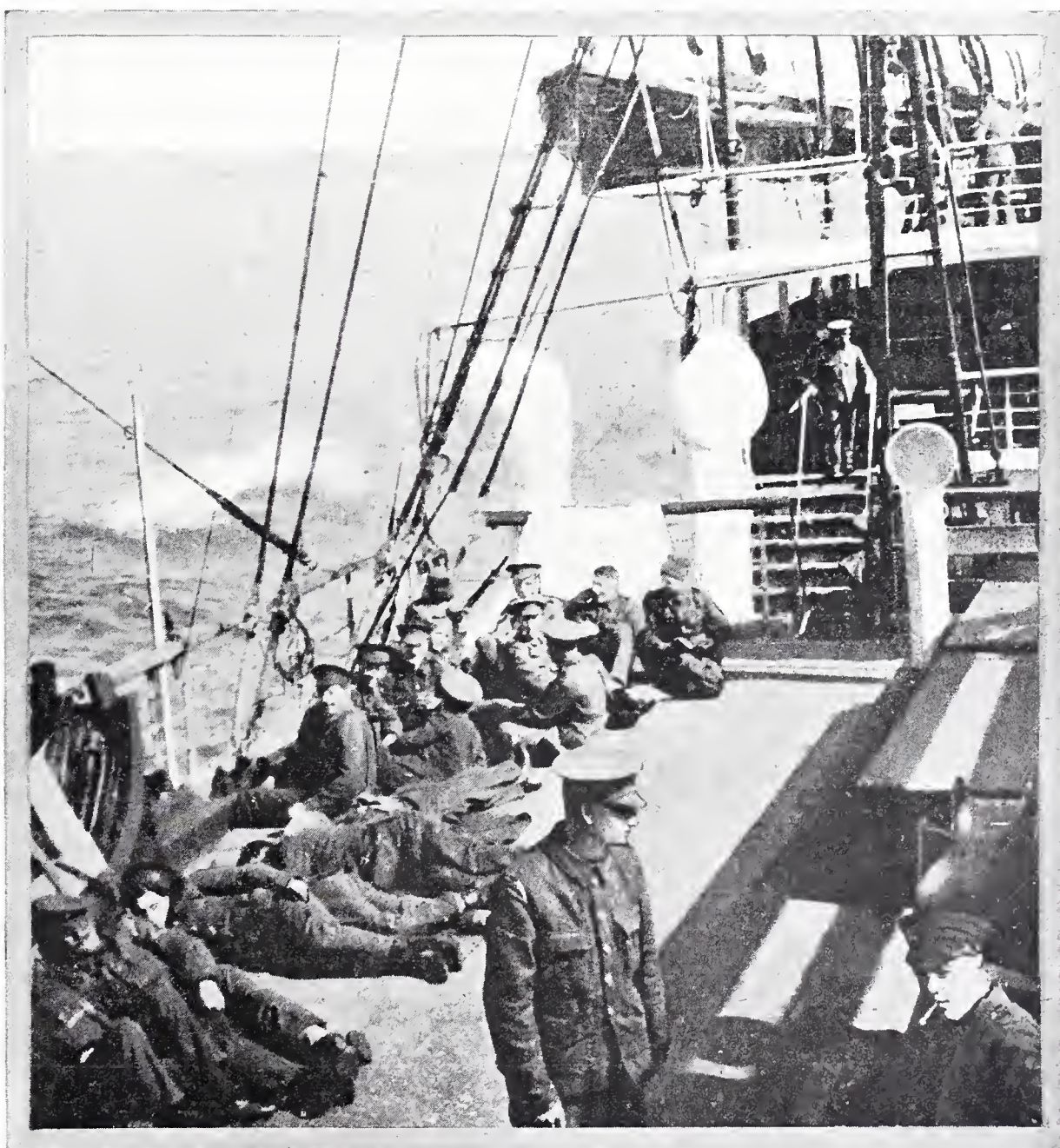


vide shipping for these troops was made by the War Office on September 5, and the Royal Mail Company offered their steamship Oruba for the Jamaica move, and the Elder Dempster Line their Akabo for that from Sierra Leone. Both offers were accepted, but, owing to the difficulty in providing escort at the time, these moves were postponed. With the exception of the Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse, which was caught and sunk off the West Coast of Africa on August 26, 1914,\* all the German raiders in the outer oceans were still at large, and the British squadrons oversea, the numbers in which were strictly limited, had all their work cut out in searching for the enemy night and day, and maintaining the patrol of the regions allotted

\* See Vol. II., p. 32.

to them. It was very exceptional for a move like this to be postponed because of the inability of the Fleet to cover it adequately, and therefore the fact has a special significance.

How the British cruisers combined convoy duties with their allotted tasks of searching for German raiders could be illustrated in several ways. There is the classic instance of the Australian cruiser Sydney which was accompanying the Australian convoy at the time she was warned of the presence of the Emden, and detached on the visit to Cocos Island which resulted in the destruction of that notorious raider. Another vessel engaged in hunting the Emden was the Yarmouth, which cruiser sank on October 15, near Sumatra, one of the enemy's chief colliers, the Markomannia. About the



IDLE HOURS ON A TRANSPORT.



same time the Yarmouth supplied the escort for a contingent of about 300 Europeans raised in Ceylon for active service. These troops were carried in the transport *Worcestershire*, which was convoyed from Colombo to Bombay by the Yarmouth, joining up there with the Indian convoy.

Mention of the last-named brings this survey to an important chapter in the annals of the transport undertakings. Several days before moves arising out of the actual war operations, the India Office was arranging for the return of the troops on furlough. On August 1, 1914, concurrently with the mobilization, an estimate was issued of the numbers (1,000 officers and 400 other ranks) who might be expected to return to India, and the *Dongola*, of the Indian Troop Service Transport, and *Somali*, of the Colonial Troop Service Transport, were stated to be ready if required to sail from Southampton on August 11. The vessels duly left on that date, carrying 2,150 officers and men. They were directed to keep together, and pursue the mid-Channel course. Bombay was reached on September 9, without escort. Eleven days later the *Dongola* and *Somali* left Bombay with troops withdrawn from India for service in Europe. They were joined by the *Dilwara*,

which had left Karachi on September 21, 1914, and the three transports were instructed to proceed to Gibraltar for orders, which enabled them to proceed in company with the *Grantully Castle*, having on board troops from Port Sudan. The cruiser *Euryalus* formed the escort, and the convoy arrived at Liverpool on October 22, 1914.

The transport requirements at this time, and later, were not all undertakings on a comprehensive and large scale. They were made up of numerous small movements each requiring skilful attention. In order, for example, to balance partially the numbers of troops in India after the withdrawals, reinforcements were drafted there from North China, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The recall of a battalion from one garrison necessitated its replacement by other troops from a less important centre, and so on, all involving a great deal of transport organization on the part of the naval authorities. There were many of these minor voyages in which the ships sailed in convoy part of the way; then for a distance in company with others, but without an escort; and perhaps even travelled for many miles entirely alone. The steamship *Thongwa*, for instance, was commissioned to convey the 1st Battalion of the Notts and



AN EGYPTIAN LABOUR PARTY LANDING STORES.

[Official photograph.]





A TORPEDOED TRANSPORT RETURNING TO LA VALETTE.

Derby Regiment from Bombay to Southampton. She sailed on September 3, 1914, under the escort of the *Minerva*, cruiser, then accompanying the Marseilles convoy, but when south of Sardinia she parted company and proceeded alone to Gibraltar. Her orders were to sail for Southampton, but these were altered, and she was diverted to Plymouth, arriving there on October 1. The *Thongwa* and *Ingoma* were to have returned with the Territorial troop convoys to India, for which the escort arrangements were: the cruisers *Euryalus* and *Bacchante* as far as Malta, the French cruiser *Dupleix* through the Mediterranean, and the East Indies Squadron from Suez to Bombay. These two troopships, however, did not wait for the convoy, but sailed without escort.

One of the earliest mentions of submarine operations interfering with the transport work occurred in connexion with a large move of British battalions from India, which left Bombay in seven transports on October 16, 1914. The troops on board included details from a large number of corps, together with women and children. Leaving Bombay without escort, the vessels proceeded under these conditions to Gibraltar, where the cruiser *Bacchante* met them. The War Office desired the port of destination to be Southampton, in order to expedite Army movements, but the Admiralty pointed out that the activity of submarines in the western part of the Channel had been

recently considerable, and advocated Plymouth, especially in view of the recent successful move of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. The correspondence which ensued ended in Plymouth being decided upon, and all the transports, with the exception of the *Dunera*, with whom the *Bacchante* could not communicate in consequence of a violent squall of wind and rain, proceeded to Plymouth, and arrived there on November 16, 1914, the protection being supplemented by the presence of the local flotilla from the Eddystone. The *Dunera* went on to Southampton, and arrived there the same day. She was the only transport not fitted with wireless telegraphy, an omission which was rectified before her next voyage.

In the records of the return of the second batch of British battalions from India, which left Bombay on November 19, 1914, and Karachi on the following day, there is also mention of submarine activity. The cruiser *Europa* supplied the escort to this second group, and no special incidents were reported until the convoy arrived in the Channel. Then the escorting ship was instructed to take special precautions, as a submarine had been sighted the previous day off Trevose Head. No untoward incident occurred, however, and the movement was completed by a smart feat of disembarkation. The vessels arrived at Devonport on December 22, 1914, and the men, women, children, stores, horses, etc., were put ashore in





[Official photograph.]

#### A DESTROYER AS TRANSPORT.

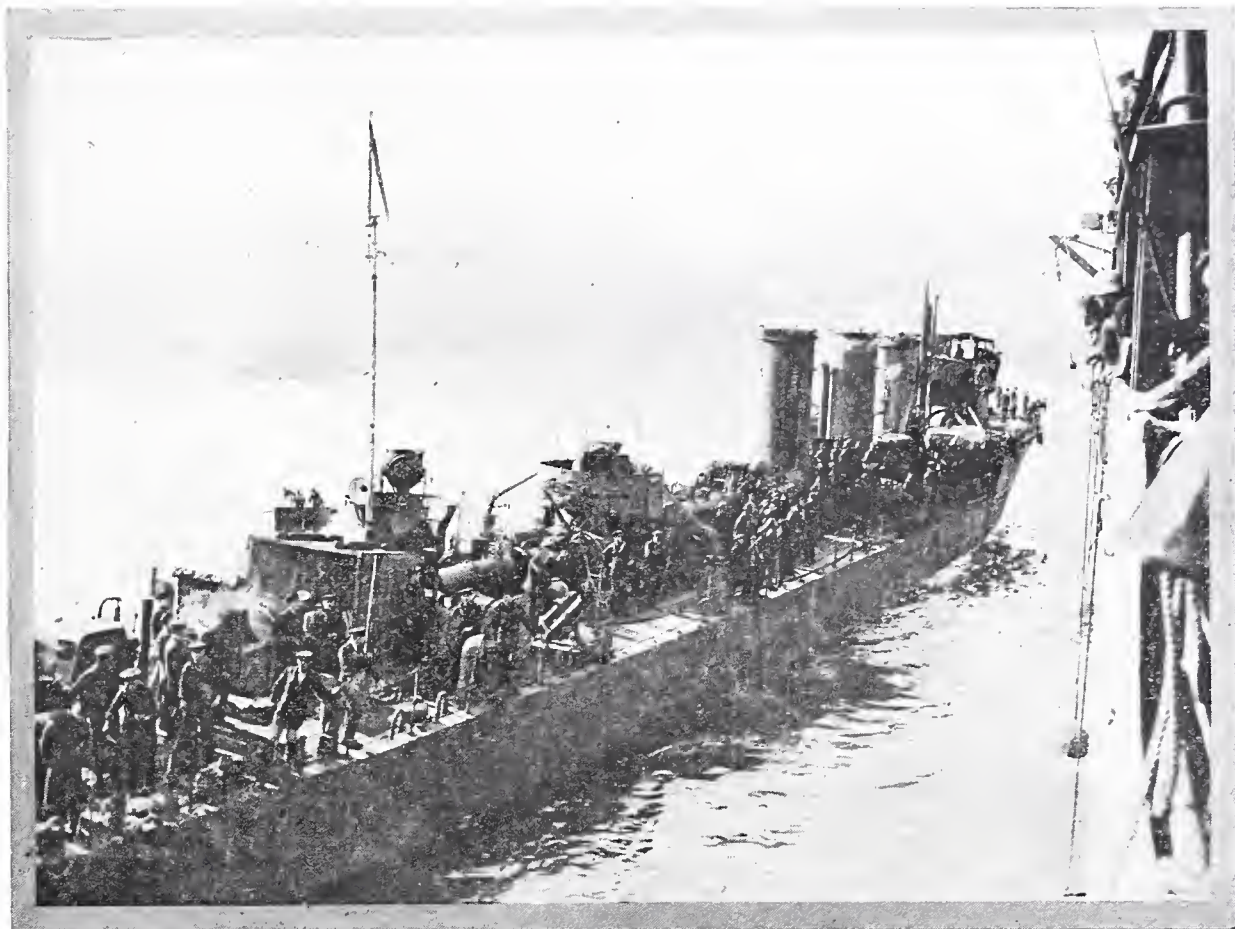
40 hours, thus eliciting from the Admiral of the Port the expression, "admirably organized and carried out."

The third and fourth batches of Indian battalions were brought home *via* Avonmouth instead of Plymouth, and the voyages were uneventful. The fifth group did not have quite such uninterrupted progress. Four transports were chartered, two of which had women and children. The other two were retained in Egypt for a time, and from one of them the passengers had to be transferred to the *Kaiser-i-Hind*. On February 27, 1915, this ship was requisitioned for the G.O.C., and her stores transferred to the *Saturnia*, which sailed for England on March 2, 1915. In the two transports carrying women and children nearly 100 cases of measles occurred during the voyage among the children. At Gibraltar, moreover, both vessels were detained owing to the danger attending upon the full moon.

Epidemics of illness occurred now and then during transport voyages, but were usually the outcome of exceptional circumstances, such as the presence of children on board. It was a matter of satisfaction that they were so rare. One outbreak was reported from the *Dover Castle*, conveying the 2nd East Lancashire

Regiment from South Africa to England. Leaving Cape Town on October 1, an epidemic of measles broke out among the women and children, and when the light cruiser *Vindictive*—afterwards destined to become famous in the operations to block the ports of Ostend and Zeebrugge—reported the occurrence it was stated that there were 135 cases, with seven deaths to date. Another occurrence of an unusual character was the holding of a court of inquiry in Egypt on November 15, 1914, upon the subject of the mortality among the horses of the East Lancashires (Territorial Force) during their voyage from England. The arrangements were, however, considered satisfactory by the Admiralty.

While upon the subject of misfortunes, it is timely to point out how few were the number of accidents caused during the navigation of the transports. Considering the magnitude of the operations, the number of voyages, and the speed at which movements had to be executed, it speaks well for our merchant seamen that they rarely had a mishap. Perusing the records of the journeys made by the transports, it was very seldom that an entry like this was found:—"The *Anglo-Egyptian* touched the breakwater at Colombo, but the damage was not sufficient



[Official photograph.]

#### BRITISH DESTROYER BRINGING IN SURVIVORS FROM A TORPEDOED SHIP.

to delay the vessel." Similarly, it was not often that an occurrence such as that reported of the *Dilwara* on October 28, 1914, took place. This ship was to have left Southampton on the following day with Territorials for India, but the Divisional Naval Transport Officer reported that her bunkers were smoking, and the troops she was intended to carry were consequently divided among the other vessels. The *Dilwara* was indeed an unlucky ship, for on November 5 it was reported that owing to the difficulty of extinguishing the fire and removing coal from her bunkers she could not leave Gibraltar until November 6. There was also trouble with her steering gear. She eventually arrived at Port Said on the 16th, and joined the convoy, which was escorted by the cruiser *Minerva* from Suez to Aden.

An example of the large amount of arrangement resulting from any big movement of troops may be furnished by the dispatch of the 11th Division to the Mediterranean in the summer of 1915. The preliminary estimate of officers, men and animals requiring transport was furnished to the shipping officials on June 19 as follows:—390 officers, 16,737 men, 2,245 horses. Five large liners were proposed, and tentatively accepted, but the

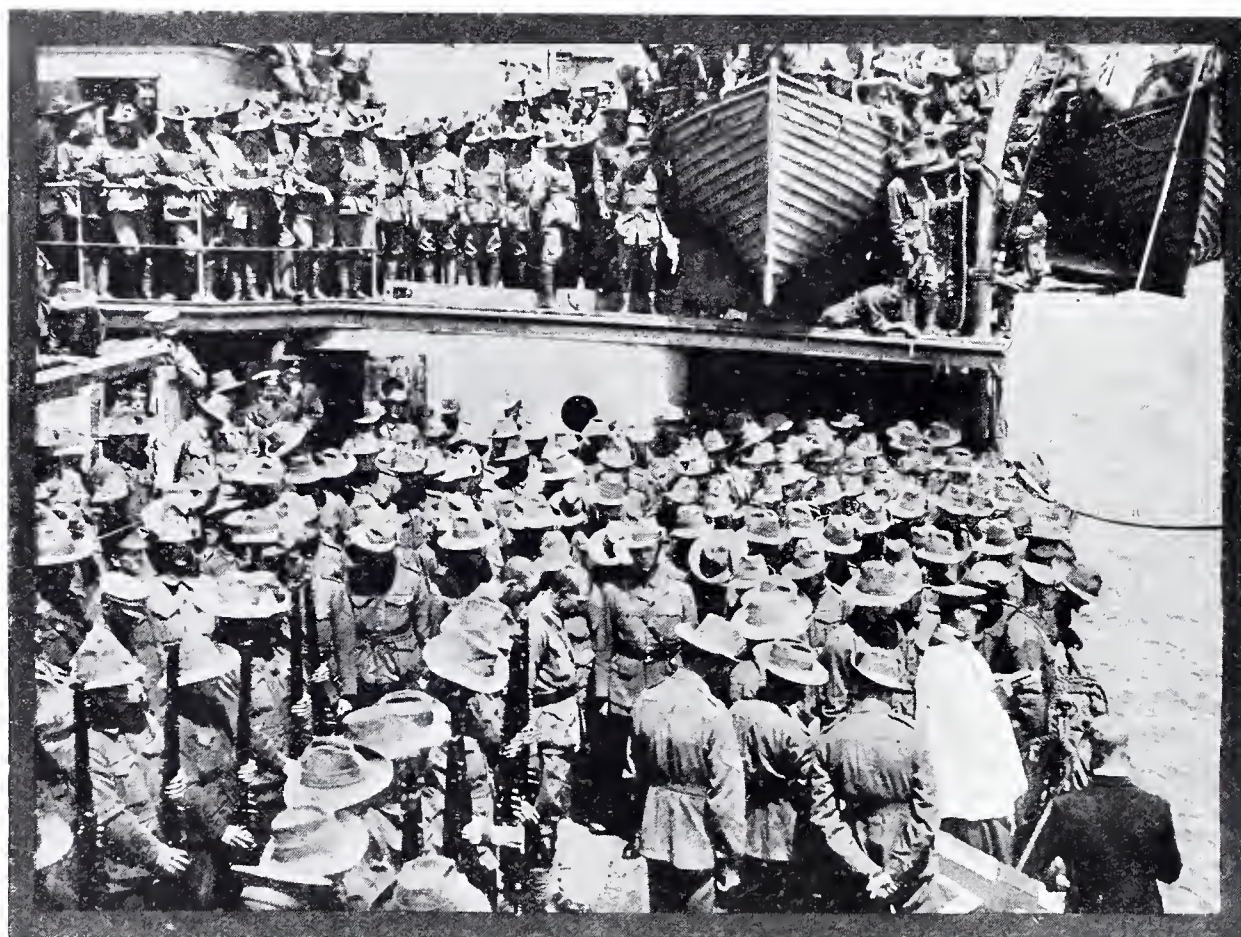
suggested use of the *Aquitania*, the mammoth steamship of 45,647 tons, launched in the year before the war, was at first negatived. One of the five, however, the *Kingstonian*, broke down. She was removed from the list, as was the *Caledonia*, which developed engine defects. The *Mauretania* and *Aquitania* were chosen instead. Within a week the *Mauretania* was taken out of the list, and the *Toronto* was decided upon in her place. Then the *Knight Templar*, obtained from the New Zealand Service, was added, and also the *Ionia*, *Megantic*, and *Simla*. In the end this large and important convoy sailed from two ports between July 1 and 7, 1915. The majority sailed from Avonmouth, while the *Empress of Britain* and *Aquitania* put to sea from Liverpool. Three destroyers were ordered to the last-named port to escort the *Empress* on her way out on July 1, with orders to return and guard the *Aquitania* on July 3. There was often a good deal of constructional work necessary in the ships to fit them for transport services, especially with the development of war material as the war progressed. At the time the 29th Division were taken to Gallipoli in the spring of 1915 it was stated that some of the derricks in the vessels used were not of sufficient



lifting power, and the Government had to supply fresh ones.

As a contrast to the foregoing, there was afforded a splendid example of quick short-distance transport on the occasion of the Dublin rising in April, 1916. A War Office requisition was received on April 24, with additions on the two following days, and in response fifteen vessels were at once taken up and assembled at Liverpool for the move, while five more available transports which were lying adjacent to Liverpool were also

vessels. The first Canadian Expeditionary Force was escorted by four cruisers, with the Canadian cruiser *Niobe* and the British battleship *Glory*. One of the early questions requiring settlement was the transport of the 7,000 horses, the alternative being the forwarding in advance of the main convoy in slower ships. Eventually the whole force sailed together. It was distributed among 31 vessels, divided into three columns, each line being headed by a cruiser, while the fourth warship was deputed to follow in the rear



A BURIAL SERVICE ON BOARD AN AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT.

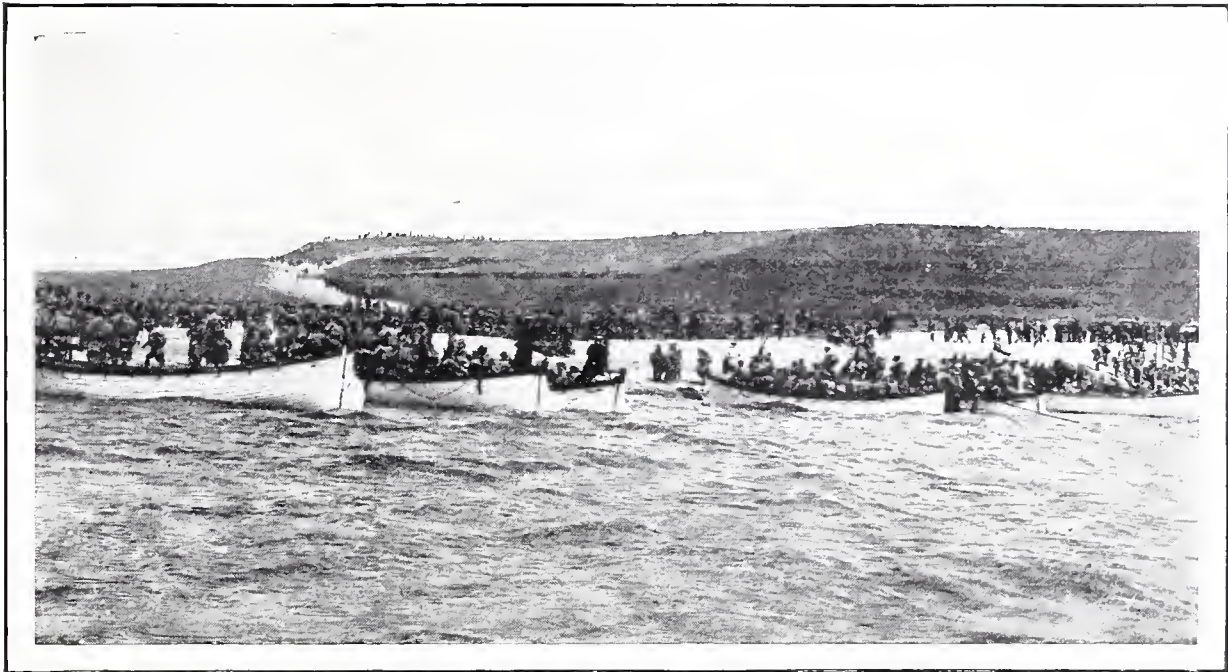
utilized. Other transports were taken up to convey troops from Pembroke to Queenstown. In six days the whole move, in which eventually some 35 vessels were engaged, was completed without mishap of any kind. The quickness characterizing the transportation was due in part to some of the vessels making three trips each, and others two trips.

Mention has yet to be made of the demands upon the shipping tonnage of the country for the transport of the Colonial contingents to the various theatres of war. Doubtless in view of the presence of German raiders in the Atlantic, no force of the Canadian Army was allowed to cross without an escort of war

The cruisers *Charybdis* (flagship), *Diana* and *Eclipse* were the column leaders, and the *Talbot* brought up the rear.

No fewer than 31,200 men were included in the Canadian forces brought to Europe in the first contingent. The difficulties of navigation connected with the movement of such a large fleet, composed of vessels as large as 18,000 tons, with 17 knots speed, and others of only 3,000 tons, with 10 knots speed, can be easily imagined. The port of disembarkation remained in doubt to the last. Southampton was naturally the first suggestion, owing to its proximity to the training ground at Aldershot. An order from the First Lord said that as





#### REHEARSING A LANDING.

submarines were in the Channel the expedition should be diverted to the Irish Channel, and landed at Liverpool or Pembroke. Inquiries showed that Pembroke had not sufficient depth of water. Plymouth was put forward as an alternative, but the War Office estimated that 10 days would be needed for the disembarkation there, although the Admiralty's calculation was seven days. This compared with three days only at Southampton.

With a view to baffling enemy agents who might obtain news of the convoy's destination, an interesting campaign of deception was kept up until the ships had actually reached England. It was doubtful whether any but the chief authorities concerned had definite knowledge of the actual arrangements until they were about to be executed. The convoy sailed from Quebec on October 3, 1914. Next day it was announced that there was no knowledge to hand of a convoy having sailed. The War Office requested that the Admiralty would reconsider their decision not to disembark at Southampton, and statements were circulated regarding the unsuitability of Plymouth. Eventually a telegram was sent to the Commander-in-Chief at Devonport informing him that the Canadian Contingent would not disembark at that port. In this way did the Admiralty mislead any spies who might have been able to make use of information respecting the voyage.

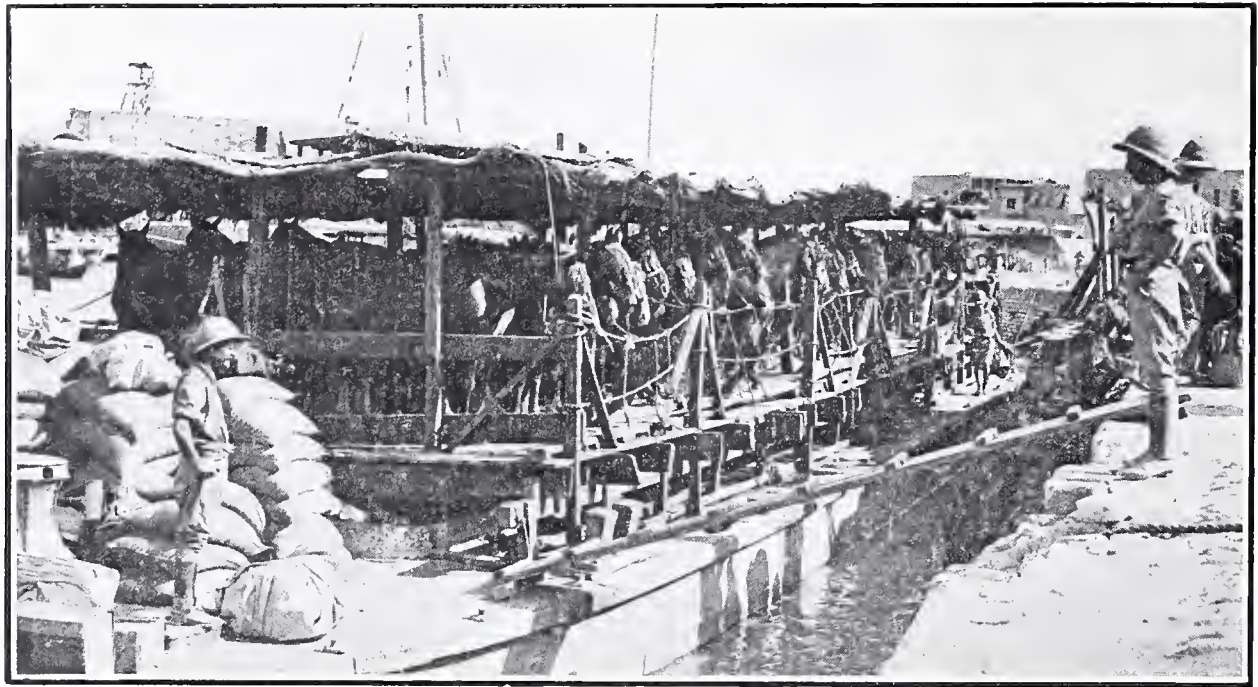
It was only to be expected that the Germans would strain every nerve to attack the convoy with submarines, but they were not able to

do so successfully with the boats of limited range and power which they then possessed. An enemy submarine was reported to have been sighted by the *Severn* and to have discharged a torpedo which missed. As a consequence the *Montreal* and *Alaunia*, conveying the divisional trains, which had been ordered by wireless to come on at once at the highest speed to Southampton, escorted by the *Diana*, were diverted to Devonport. Eventually the whole expedition came to the western port, except the *Royal Edward*, which, to relieve the congestion, was sent on to Avonmouth. By the 15th all the transports had reached Plymouth, with the exceptions mentioned, and by the 22nd all the troops had been disembarked.

On the whole, the undertaking had been an undoubted success. Difficulties in the way were speedily overcome, and the smoothness and celerity of the enterprise augured well for the work of the Canadian troops on the European battlefields. The cooperation between the naval and mercantile officers was whole-hearted and cordial.

As with Canada, so with Australia and New Zealand. On September 5, 1914, the Commonwealth Government announced that all the units of the original Expeditionary Force would be ready to embark within six weeks. It was not many days over that period when on November 1, 1914, a telegram from the Naval Board at Melbourne stated that 36 transports with escort had sailed that day for Colombo. The original intention was to bring the convoy





TRANSPORT OF HORSES ON THE TIGRIS.

to England *via* the Cape of Good Hope. On November 21, 1914, however, there was made the momentous decision to land the troops in Egypt for the defence of the country and to complete their training. The sequel to this, of course, was the employment of these splendid troops in Gallipoli, where they won immortal fame by the display of their superb fighting qualities. It was reported that a vast amount of correspondence ensued as to the employment of the various ships unexpectedly released by the change of plans. The only troops in the convoy which came on to England were some reservists of the Imperial Army who were on board the *Miltiades*. The escorting ships for the Australian and New Zealand troops included the cruiser *Minotaur*, flagship of the Commander-in-Chief in China, and the cruiser *Hampshire*, the ill-fated vessel in which Lord Kitchener lost his life off the Orkneys.

A second large convoy of Australian and New Zealand troops sailed from Albany on December 31, 1914. It comprised 19 transports, 16 of which conveyed the Second Australian Contingent and the others reinforcements from New Zealand. This convoy set out amidst unsettling rumours, for on the day before it left Albany a report was received of a German armed merchant cruiser having been seen off Mafia Island, but the report was afterwards discredited. Among the escorting vessels there were the French cruiser *Montcalm* and the British cruiser *Psyche*.

Another interesting series of operations arose

out of the bringing home of the British garrisons from the Far East. Three vessels were detailed to bring home troops from China, and their progress was an illustration of Allied naval cooperation. From Hong Kong to Singapore escort was furnished by the Russian warships *Askold* and *Jemchug*, of which the latter was afterwards sunk by the *Emden* during the raid into the harbour at Penang on October 28, 1914. Similarly, the Japanese Fleet supplied an escort for one of the troopships north of Hong Kong. From Bombay the French cruiser *Dupleix* joined in the escort. Calling at Malta, the vessels were taken over there by the *Proserpine*, and this British cruiser was relieved by another one, the *Diana*, after Gibraltar had been passed. In this way there were no missing links in the protective chain for the return of these long-service troops to the homeland. A later small move from the East was the return of the Royal Garrison Artillery from Hong Kong and Ceylon. The *Monmouthshire*, carrying a cargo of ammunition from Japan, was deputed to embark these troops, and the British sloop *Clio* supplied the escort for her. From Gibraltar the cruiser *Eclipse* formed the escort. In the *Monmouthshire* there were 50,000 rifles from Japan, and 20,000,000 rounds of small arm ammunition. Another interesting movement was that of a battalion of the South Wales Borderers from Tsingtau. The destroyer *Usk* was employed on escort duty on this occasion.

As the long-service troops were brought back



from oversea stations and garrisons, so provision was made to replace them with Territorial battalions. Very large transport undertakings were involved in this connexion. The first mention of the movement of a whole Division occurs in the record of the dispatch of a Territorial Division and two Yeomanry Regiments to Egypt, an Infantry Brigade to Malta, and two battalions to Gibraltar. The first notice of this movement was given on August 29, 1914, and within seven days 19 vessels had been appropriated. They left Southampton between September 4 and 10, 1914. The escorting vessels were the cruisers *Amphitrite* and *Minerva* and the battleship *Ocean*.

At the end of October another Division of Territorials was dispatched *en bloc* to India—the Home Counties Division. About 457 officers and 12,112 men were involved in this movement, and the escort was provided by the cruisers *Bacchante* and *Diana*, while the *Minerva* served the purpose from Suez to Aden.

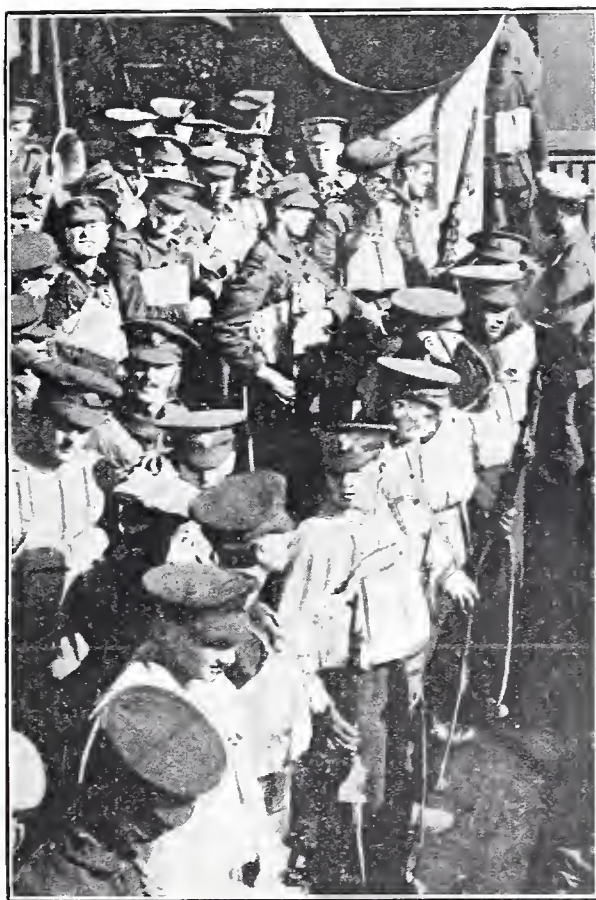
It is fitting to refer briefly at this juncture to the services of the hospital ships to and from all the theatres of war. A great deal of incessant work was involved in affording them protection, and the very small percentage of loss, even in face of the ruthless methods of the Germans, spoke well for the efficiency of the convoy arrangements.

The expedition to the Dardanelles opened up a new chapter in the history of the British transport and convoy undertakings of the war. On January 29, 1915, the First Lord intimated that sufficient transports for carrying an Infantry Brigade to Malta should be prepared and be ready to sail on February 5. Four vessels were at first suggested, but only two were eventually detailed, and these, carrying 2,100 officers and men and 20 horses of the Royal Naval Division, left Devonport on February 6, reaching Mudros on the 19th. It was at 8 a.m. on the morning of this day that the long-range bombardment of the outer forts at the Dardanelles was begun.\* On March 4 demolition parties from the Royal Naval Division were landed to clear ground at the entrance to the Straits.

The Royal Naval Division was soon followed by a Naval Air Unit—the nucleus of the Wing of the Royal Naval Air Service which later on performed splendid achievements at the Darda-

nelles. This first contingent, including 15 officers and 150 men, went out in the *Inkonka*, which shipped foods and fittings at the West India Import Dock, London, and then went round to Devonport to embark personnel. Trouble with the crew of this transport delayed the sailing until March 4, 1915.

It is unnecessary to follow in detail the great expansion of transport work involved by the Dardanelles expedition. The dispatch there of the 29th Division, the 10th and 11th Divisions, and the 53rd and 54th Divisions, among others, were all large undertakings, and



LIFE-BELT DRILL ON A TRANSPORT.

the deathless stories of the conditions under which the British and Australasian troops made their landing in Gallipoli have already been told in these pages.\*

There shine through the records of the transport operations of the war many sterling qualities, of which every Briton may be proud. The huge resources of the Mercantile Marine, the eagerness of the shipmasters to answer all calls upon their fleets, the industry of the harbour and dock officials and men, the splendid efficiency of the ships and their machinery, and, greatest of all, the untiring

\* See Vol. V., p. 382.

\* See Vol. V., p. 441.



devotion to duty and heroism of the crews: all these are facts which stand out clearly.

To appreciate better the significance of the transport and convoy achievements of these early days of the war, let the conditions to be faced by the Admiralty be borne in mind. The threat of the German Fleet at Wilhelmshaven

overshadowed every movement by sea. At any time a couple of battle-cruisers of high speed might make a dash out of the North Sea and play havoc with the shipping pursuing its harmless way along the various routes and lines of communication. A descent of this kind upon a large convoy—unwieldy, slow, and altogether an easy target for the enemy—could hardly fail



TROOPS EMBARKING FOR THE DARDANELLES.



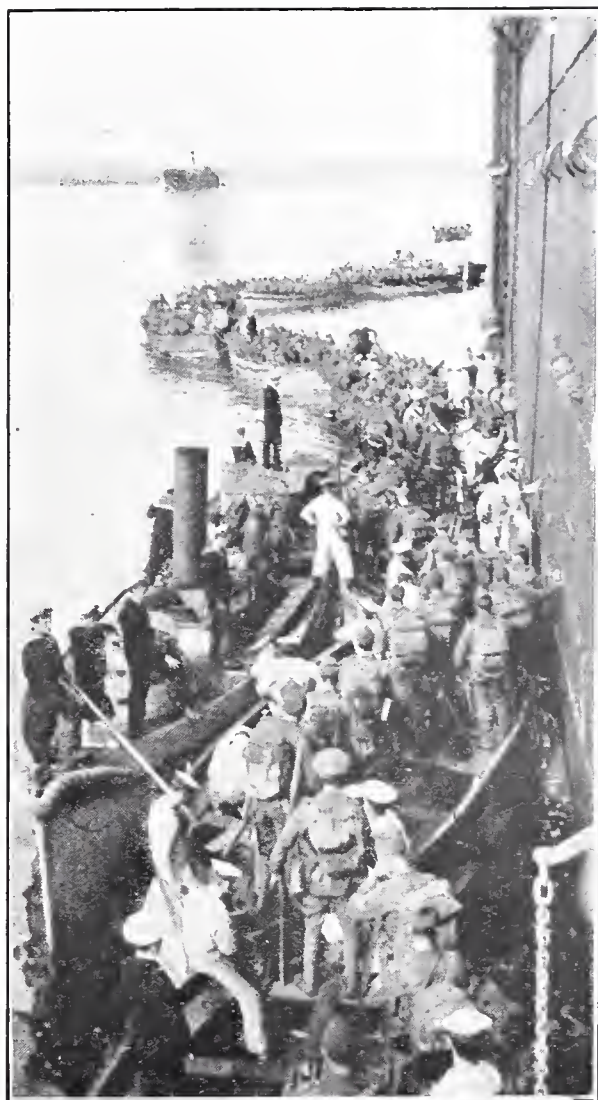
to have had disastrous consequences. That it did not occur is a tribute to the precautions taken. Although various enemy raiders attempted to get out of the North Sea, nearly all were prevented. The few which succeeded in reaching the outer oceans were effectively shadowed, so that they achieved nothing against the Allied transports, although successful in picking up a few merchant vessels.

In course of time the conditions at sea changed. The watch on the enemy exits was made more stringent, increasing the sense of freedom and security with which the movement of troops all over the world was carried out. The raiders at large in the outer oceans were swept away. Submarine operations developed to an unthought-of degree, and there was some sacrifice of life on this account—the chief, if not the only, cause of serious mishaps to the transport undertakings. As each under-water campaign was launched with ever-increasing violence, the energies of the Admiralty in regard to transport became centred in devising and organizing means and methods of affording protection against the U-boats. The submarine warfare eventually, in the summer of 1917, obliged the adoption of a system of convoys for merchant ships similar to that which had been in vogue since the commencement of the war for troopships. The Navy was taxed more than ever for escort duties, but the response was magnificent, and every available vessel was pressed into the important service of guarding the Empire's shipping tonnage.

It was a year after the outbreak of war before England had the misfortune to lose a troopship at sea. On August 14, 1915, the transport *Royal Edward*, conveying reinforcements for the 29th Division in Gallipoli, and details of the Royal Army Medical Corps, was torpedoed and sunk in the *Ægean* Sea, with the loss of about 1,000 lives.\* This fine vessel was one of the liners employed to bring over the first Canadian Contingent, and was subsequently employed for a time as an internment ship for enemy aliens off Southend. She was making her second voyage to Gallipoli when attacked.

The next transport loss, also in the *Ægean*, occurred to the *Ramazan*, which was sunk by shell fire from an enemy submarine at 6 a.m. on September 19 off the island of Antikythera. Of 380 Indian troops on board 305 were lost, as well as a number of the crew. The shell fire

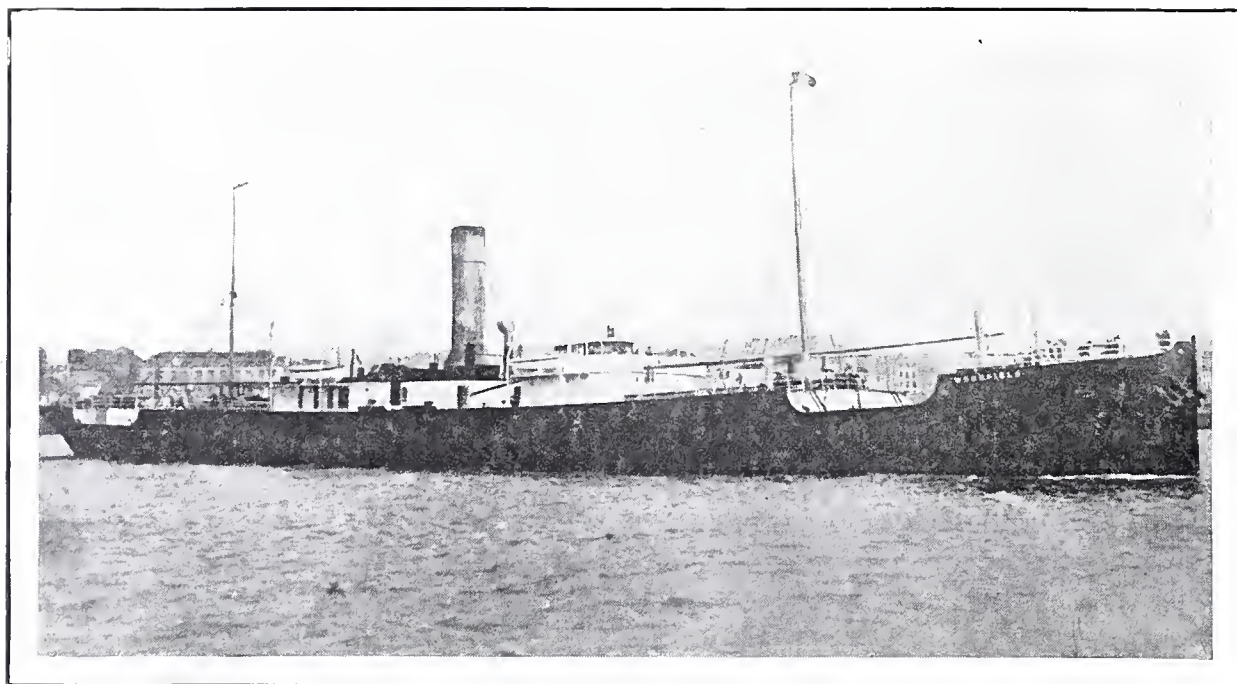
\* See Vol. VII., pp. 156, 445.



A LANDING IN GALLIPOLI.

smashed a number of boats, but others were utilized by survivors to reach the island, where they were hospitably treated by the inhabitants. A month later the transport *Marquette* was torpedoed and sunk in the *Ægean*, with a loss of 99 lives; and on November 3, 1915, there was a further loss in the Mediterranean of the *Woodfield*, with slight loss of life. The *Woodfield* was sunk off the coast of Morocco. There were six killed and 14 injured amongst the military on board, and 45 British and 9 Arabs were saved. These survivors managed to get ashore, and were taken charge of by the Spanish authorities at Alhucemas, Penon, and Melilla, who treated them with every consideration and kindness. A party was captured by Moorish tribesmen, but it was announced on December 13 that they had been released. Survivors of the *Woodfield* told a thrilling story of the encounter with the submarine. The ship, bound from Avonmouth, was attacked when about 14 miles east of Gibraltar. The submarine soon got the range, and peppered the





THE LONDON STEAMER WOODFIELD.

steamer with shells. The gun on board the Woodfield was manned, but as the submarine kept out of range she was able to fire on the transport with impunity. Captain Robert Hughes was hit twice by fragments of shell, and the mate also had a narrow escape. Down below, the chief engineer stoked the fires himself for over an hour, as the Arab firemen ran on deck at the beginning of the attack. Eventually, as further resistance was useless, the order was given to take to the boats. The men began rowing at 8.30 a.m. One of the four boats travelled across the sea, mile after mile, until late on the evening of the same day, when, having failed to attract a passing steamer to their rescue, the latter suspecting a ruse, they reached a lighthouse, the Spanish occupants of which gave them succour.

It was nearly 12 months after this before the British authorities had again to report the loss of a transport. Then on October 4, 1916, the Cunard steamship *Franconia*, on transport duty, was sunk in the Mediterranean by an enemy submarine. She was fortunately not carrying troops at the time, but 12 of her crew were missing after the attack. The next loss was also of an empty transport, the horse-carrying vessel *Russian*, which was sunk on December 14, 1916, with the loss of 11 of her crew and 17 American muleteers. Then on January 1, 1917, came the loss of the *Ivernia*, with 85 casualties among the rank and file on board. She was sunk by an enemy submarine during bad weather. Like the *Franconia*, she was formerly a Cunard steamer.

In addition to the foregoing instances in which transports were sunk, there were also occasions when the transports were attacked, and although not sunk, loss of life occurred. On April 17, 1915, during the early part of the Dardanelles operations, the transport *Manitou* was attacked by a Turkish torpedo boat which had escaped from Smyrna, the *Dhair Hissar*. Orders were given to abandon the vessel, and owing to the capsizing of two boats while this was being done 51 lives were lost. The torpedo boat then fired three torpedoes, which all missed, and was eventually driven off by the British cruiser *Minerva* and destroyers which came up. In the end the Turkish boat was run ashore and destroyed on the coast of Chios. This incident had a historical significance as being the first occasion, so far as official reports showed, that a British transport had suffered loss of life owing to enemy action.

Two other cases of attacks on transports in which the ships escaped were those of the *Southland* on September 2, and the *Mereian* on November 3, 1915, both in the Mediterranean. The former was rendered memorable by the fine behaviour of the Australian troops on board. On the order being given to abandon ship, they obeyed instructions without any excitement, and occupied the time by singing "Australia will be there"! Although torpedoed, the *Southland* reached Mudros under her own steam at 10 p.m. the same day. Out of 1,600 troops on board there were only about 30 casualties. The following is an extract

from the letter of a subaltern in the Southland, published in *The Times* on November 13, 1915:

I received orders to go on the S.S. Southland and proceed to Anzac to join up the batteries. I went on the ill-fated Southland and left with an infantry regiment whose name should go down to history, only equalled by the Marines on board the Birkenhead. After two days' sailing, at 10.14 a.m., I heard a sentry shout, "My God! a torpedo," and we watched this line of death getting nearer and nearer, until Crash! and the old ship reeled with the report. Then the order "Ship sinking" and "Abandon ship"; without a cry or any sign of fear or without any more hurry than a brisk march and singing "Australia will be there!" I cannot say how magnificent, how fine, they were. They went to their stations and lowered the boats in an orderly, careful way, taking the places they had been told off to, the injured going in first.

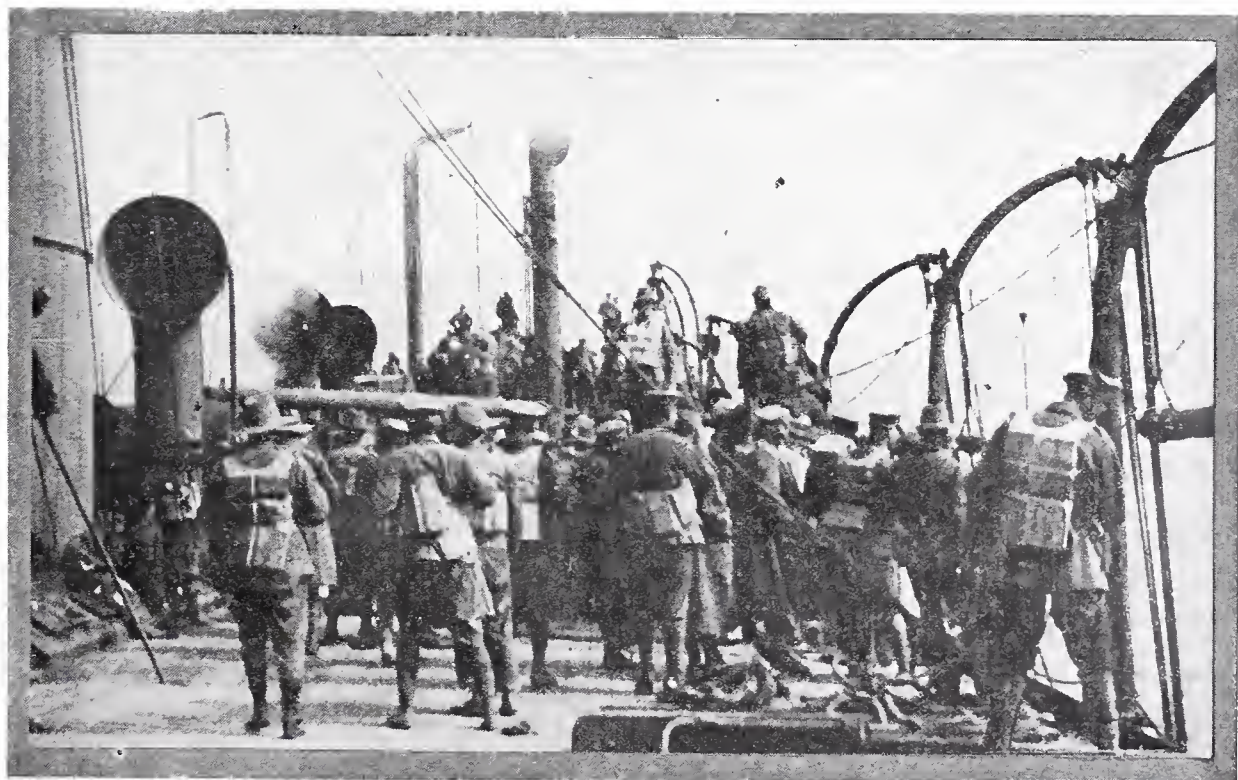
I went at the beginning and got my revolver and life belt, and went to my boat, but as two other boats had to be got off first, another sub. and myself went round the ship collecting the injured and also brandy, and opening the bars and smashing all the spirits in case there should be any panic. I then went round underneath the bunkers—all the corners where wounded might have got to, but found none; then I dashed up on deck again. I felt when underneath like a rat in a cage. I then helped to lower the boats till every one was off except the General and Staff, one of whom ordered me to get into one of the boats. It was the last ship's boat to leave. Then after about an hour in a half-floating boat I was pulled out and taken on board the hospital ship Neuralia and given brandy and kit. . . .

The moment when that torpedo came towards us was the most awful experience I can ever remember. . . . to wait and keep calm in the face of what seemed a certain death. I should like to write to every paper and say, "Never can men have faced death with greater courage, more nobility, and with a braver front than did the Australian and New Zealand troops on board the S.S. Southland." The song they sang was "Australia will be there," and by God they were. They were

heroes; we knew they were brave in a charge, but now we know they are heroes. Long live in honour and glory the men of the 21st and 23rd Australian Infantry.

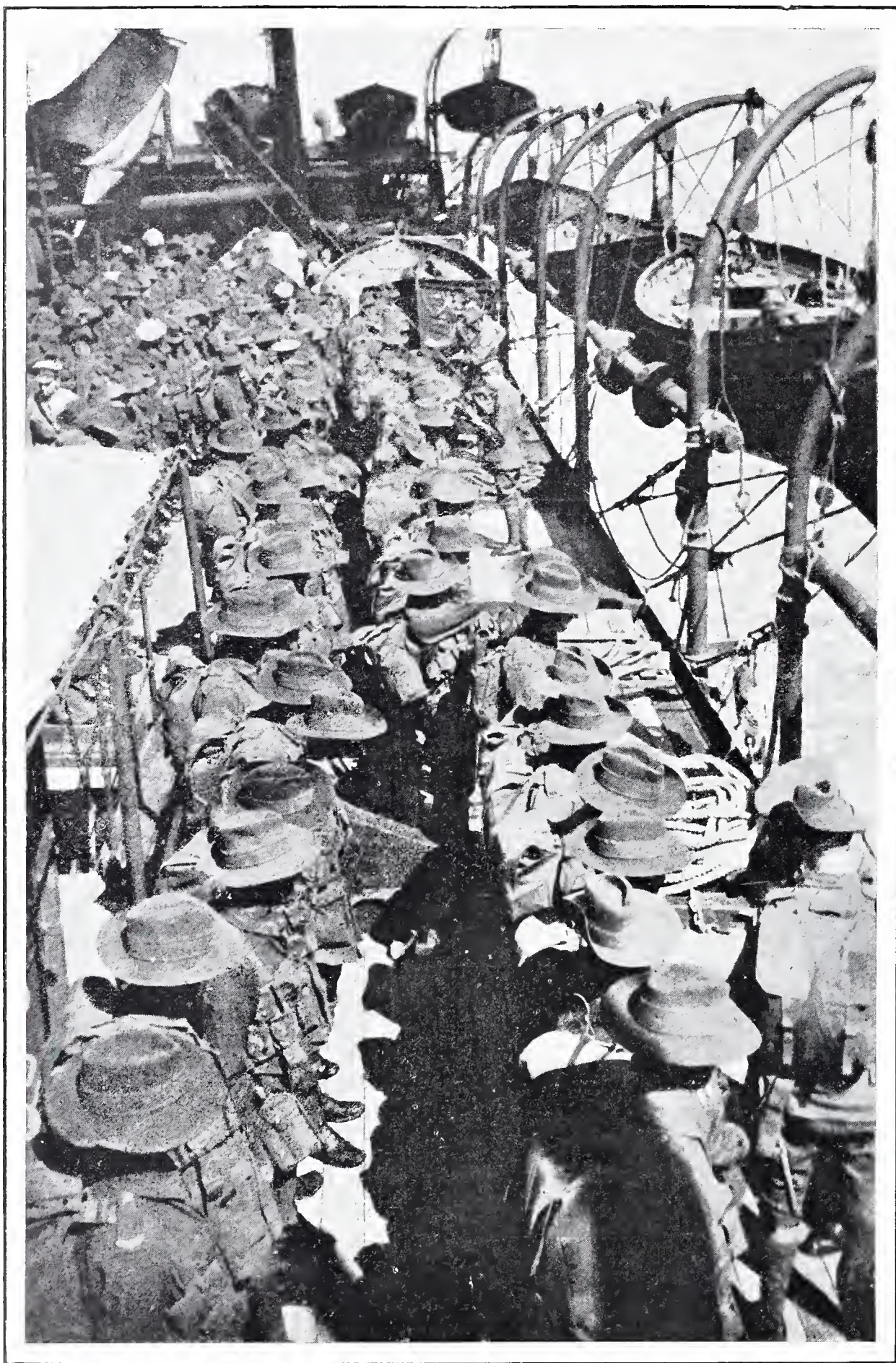
Equally inspiring was the conduct of the Lincolnshire Yeomanry on board the Mercian when attacked by gunfire from an enemy submarine. On the call being sounded, the troops fell in at their appointed places with soldierly calmness and promptitude, and for the hour and a quarter of the attack, during which time the ship was struck by about 30 shells, excellent discipline prevailed. The Army Council issued an Order to the G.O.C., Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, expressing appreciation of this steadfast and soldierly behaviour. Among individual acts mentioned was that of an amateur steersman—Private Thompson, of Horncastle, who relieved the master of the ship, Captain Walker, who had been obliged to steer the ship himself on the disappearance of the ship's quartermaster. Thompson had never steered a vessel in his life, but his coolness and resource were invaluable. The captain, above the din of the firing, made arm signals to him as to which way the wheel was to be turned, and by the courage with which he stuck to this job Thompson undoubtedly helped materially to save the lives of most of those on board.

The loss of the Ivernia on January 1, 1917, has already been referred to, and during that year nine other troopships were reported to



SINKING OF THE BALLARAT: MANNING THE LIFE-BOATS.





ON BOARD THE BALLARAT AFTER SHE WAS STRUCK.



have been mined or torpedoed. Nearly all these losses occurred in the Mediterranean, and unfortunately were in most cases attended by the destruction of life. On April 15 the transports *Arcadian*, of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, and the *Cameronia*, an Anchor liner, were sunk. The former sank in five minutes after she had been struck, and of those on board 279 were missing, and were presumed to have been drowned. The vessel had left Salonika with some hundreds of troops on board, and an officer writing to his friends

torpedoed and sunk on April 25 (Anzac Day) Owing to the magnificent discipline and steadiness displayed by all, the troops were able to get into the boats and were brought ashore without any casualties. The King ordered the following telegram to be dispatched to the Officer Commanding:—"I have learnt with pride and satisfaction of the admirable discipline and fearless spirit displayed by all ranks under your command in their recent perilous experience. They emulated at sea the noble deeds of their brothers on land." The Tran-



SOME AUSTRALIANS RESCUED FROM THE BALLARAT.

spoke of the risky work by the patrol vessels as splendid "In an incredibly short time a thousand of us were packed like sardines on board a vessel and were tearing away for our present safe harbour under full steam." One patrol boat succeeded in saving 236 men, both officers and bluejackets, it was said, jumping into the water with the greatest gallantry to pick up the survivors. The *Cameronia* was carrying troops from the Midlands, altogether over 3,000 officers and men. The vessel sank in 45 minutes, and the discipline displayed was all that could be desired, the loss amounting to only 140, including 11 of the crew. In this case also reference was made to the gallantry of the destroyer's crews. The homeward bound transport *Ballarat*, carrying a large number of the Australian Imperial Forces, was

*sylvania*, also of the Anchor Line, was torpedoed in the Mediterranean on May 4, with a loss of 413 lives, including the captain of the ship. Many of the people on board were killed when the torpedo struck the vessel. Sixty-six nurses of a hospital unit which was on its way to the front were in the vessel, and as the women were being lowered into the boats the soldiers standing at attention sang to them. This mishap occurred in a very heavy sea, which partly accounted for the loss of life. The ship went down in 50 minutes. The Admiralty sent a telegram of thanks and congratulation to the Japanese admiral in the Mediterranean for the splendid work of rescue performed by the Japanese destroyers on this occasion. Of the remaining ships reported to have been sunk in the Mediterranean with





#### THE ARAGON HEELING OVER BEFORE THE FINAL PLUNGE :

A rescuing destroyer alongside ; soldiers on a life-raft from the ship.

troops on board, the Aragon, of the Royal Mail Steamship Company, and the Osmanieh, of the Khedivial Mail Steamship Company, were destroyed within a day of each other, on December 30 and 31. The Aragon was torpedoed when on a voyage between two ports in the Mediterranean, and she had nearly reached her destination when she met her doom ; 610 of those on board were lost, including the captain of the ship. It is probable that there would have been more survivors had not a destroyer which had picked up a number of the men been herself torpedoed and sunk. All the nurses and sisters were saved in this ship, but in the case of the Osmanieh, which was mined, eight of the nurses on board lost their lives. Of the troopships lost outside the Mediterranean the most noteworthy was the Tyndareus, Captain George Flynn, and owned by the Ocean Steamship Company. At 8 p.m. on February 9, 1917, she struck a mine off Cape Agulhas on the South African coast. A gale was blowing at the time, and the ship at once began to settle by the head. The troops on board, a battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel John Ward, M.P., paraded in perfect order, and although faced with the probability of imminent death, maintained the utmost courage and discipline. "Never," said the Admiralty

announcement, "was a tradition of the British Army more worthily upheld than on this occasion." It was also recalled that the incident took place not far from the spot where the immortal Birkenhead went down. After the troops had been transferred to steamers and taken to Simonstown, the ship was saved by the devotion and perseverance of her captain and crew. The King expressed his deep admiration of the conduct of all ranks on this occasion. The outstanding feature, indeed, of every incident of the kind during the war was the cool and calm conduct of the troops, and the courage and discipline exhibited by soldiers and seamen alike in the stricken vessels, while equally gratifying was the smart rescue work performed by the Navy.

It was in February, 1917, that the German campaign of unlimited submarine warfare was inaugurated,\* and shortly afterwards the need for organizing the merchant traffic into groups for mutual protection was recognized and acted upon. In the Official Report of the War Cabinet for 1917 it was stated :

A new feature of the means adopted for the protection of trade against submarines has been a return to the convoy system as practised in bygone wars. It has been markedly effective in reducing the losses. During

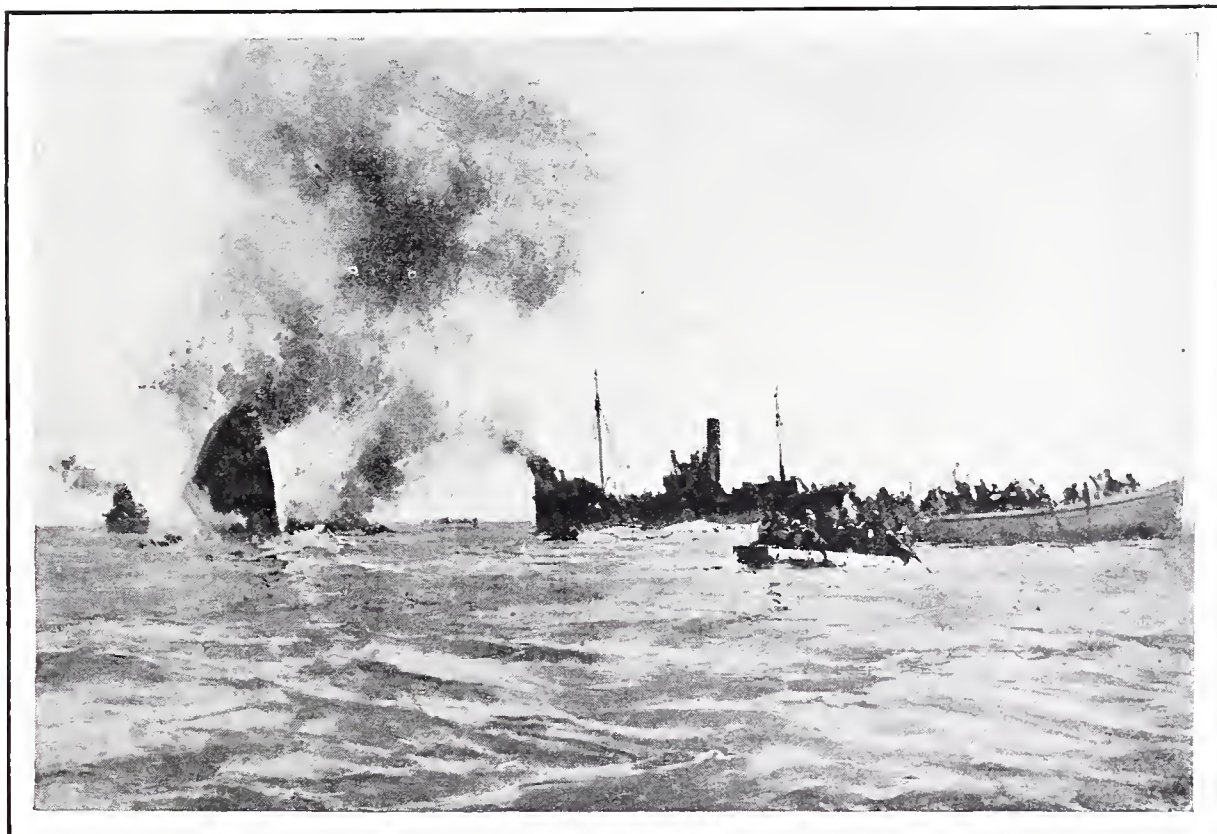
\* See Vol. XIV., p. 158.

the last few months over 90 per cent. of all vessels sailing in all the Atlantic trades were convoyed, and since the convoy system started the total percentage of loss to vessels while actually in convoy, whether as the result of enemy action or marine risks, has been 0·82 per cent. in the case of Atlantic convoys, and 0·58 per cent. in the case of all mercantile convoy systems taken together.

By the end of July, 1917, the convoy system was in full working order. It called for a certain amount of forbearance on the part of merchant shipowners and masters to adapt themselves to its requirements, for, as will be readily understood, the best of such systems cannot avoid delays, which in certain cases proved irksome. Thanks, however, to the spirit shown, the new policy was introduced with celerity and smoothness. Similarly, the merchant captains soon learnt what was required of them when sailing in convoy, and quickly fell into the ways of the fleets of which their vessels formed units, and which were organized on purely naval lines. The merchant officers displayed a high standard of technical efficiency and seamanship which earned the commendation of their brethren of the Royal Navy.

The first trade route to which the convoy system was applied was the important one between Great Britain and Scandinavia, the value of which was accentuated by the events of this war. Denmark and Norway supplied us with a certain amount of food products, and the latter also exported such valu-

able commodities for war purposes as aluminium, pit-props, timber, and wood-pulp. Sweden likewise was in a position to supply iron ore of a high grade, carbide, and similar materials of great importance for our manufactures. Not only was it extremely desirable to obtain these articles, but the more sent to this country the less there was available for export to Germany. The Scandinavian Powers were in the position of merchants ready to sell to the best customer, in return for goods which they themselves needed, such as coal. If the Germans were able to offer them a better or more reliable market for their output, it was natural that they should look to the German merchants; if, on the other hand, the British Navy kept open for them the valued markets in Great Britain, they were ready to avail themselves accordingly. Thus the Scandinavian convoy was good because it brought us food and raw materials we needed; it was also good because it kept these things from our enemies. Furthermore, in Norway we had our nearest centre of oversea supplies. A small vessel trading there could by the frequency of her voyages bring to us in a given time as much as, or more than, a large liner making the trip from Australia or New Zealand. There was abundant scope for the Ministry of Shipping so to organize the vessels sailing in convoy



THE LAST OF THE ARAGON.



that the wastage was reduced to a minimum. In this the Ministry was very successful, and Sir Joseph Maclay and his Staff were specially commended for their achievement by the Prime Minister in his speech at Edinburgh on May 24, 1918.

It was inevitable that the presence in the North Sea of these convoys to Scandinavia, provided only with an escort sufficient for anti-submarine purposes, should attract the attention of the German Admiralty. At daybreak on October 17, 1917, 12 merchant ships on their way from the Shetlands to Norway, escorted by the destroyers *Mary Rose* and *Strongbow*, and three small craft, were attacked by two German vessels of a very fast cruiser class.\* The escort was sunk, as also nine of the 12 merchant ships. As Sir Eric Geddes explained in the House of Commons on November 1, 1917, it was practically impossible with the light forces at the disposal of the Navy entirely to prevent sporadic raids of this kind. The area of the North Sea was 140,000 square miles, we had a coast subject to attack by raiders of 566 nautical miles in length from Cape Wrath to Dover, and the area of vision for a light cruiser squadron with its attendant destroyers at night was well under five square miles. Five square miles in 140,000! Sir Eric Geddes also informed the House that the Scandinavian convoy system was started in April, 1917, and more than 4,500 vessels had been convoyed by the British Navy in that convoy alone, the affair on October 17 being the first occasion upon which a single ship had been lost by surface attack.

Later information regarding the progress of the convoy system was furnished by the First Lord when he introduced the Navy Estimates on March 5, 1918. He was then able to state that the convoy system had been greatly developed, with the result that a very large proportion of our overseas trade was working in this way, and was a real success. Over 35,000 ships had been convoyed, he said, and the losses of vessels in every way, whether by submarine, mine, or surface craft, was very low. In addition to the protection afforded by the convoy, additional security was obtained from the fact that whilst in convoy the Admiralty instructions issued for the safety of shipping were closely followed. This adherence to Admiralty instructions was not systematically followed otherwise, said Sir Eric, and although

there might be injudicious orders given occasionally, he was convinced that the greatest safety of all shipping rested in the observance of Admiralty orders, which were issued in the light of the most recent information, and were of a most useful and practical type.

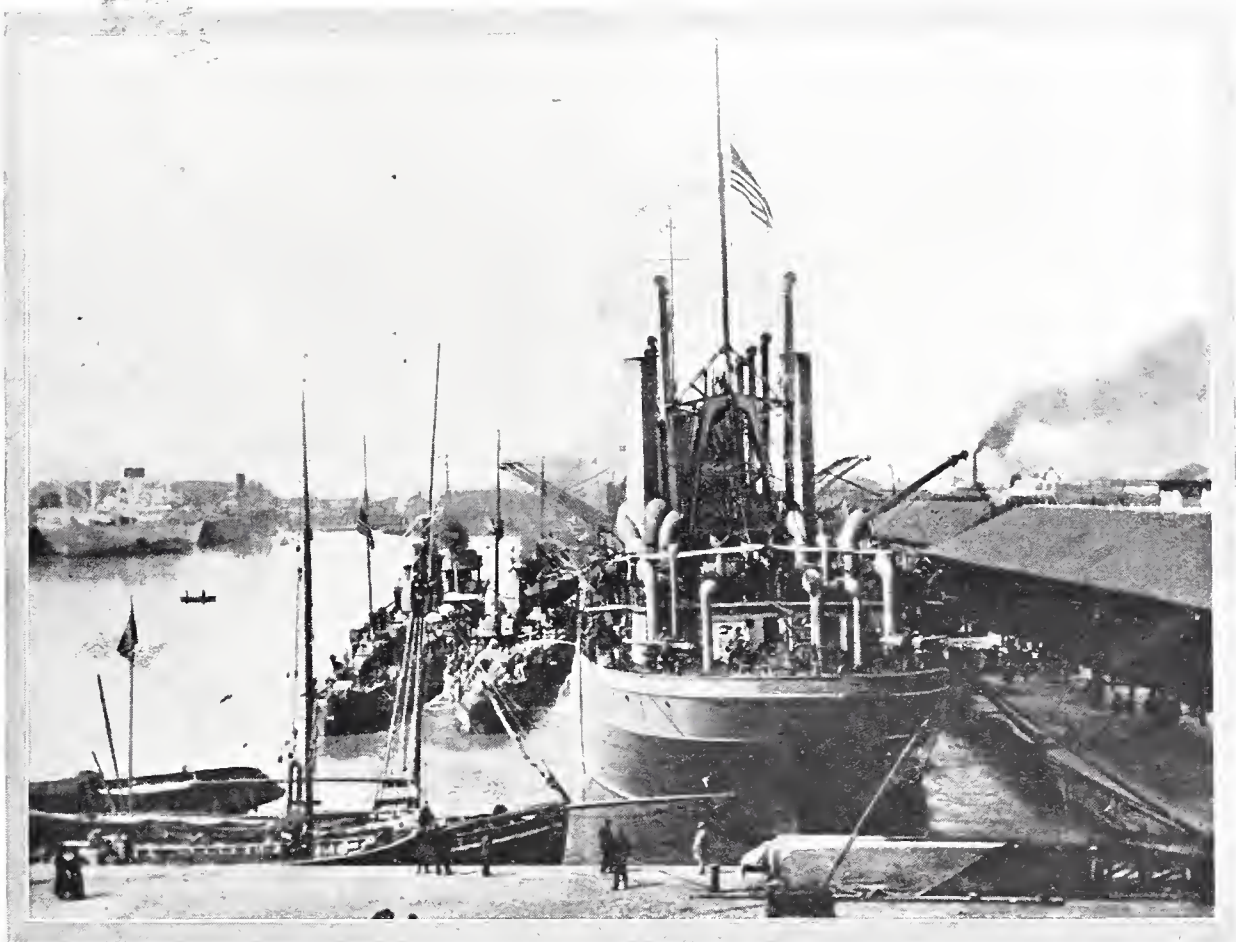
The organization of the Scandinavian shipping into convoys was followed by an extension of the principle to the Atlantic and Mediterranean traffic. This was highly necessary, because wheat, meat, sugar, tea, iron ore, nitrates, and many other things for ourselves and our Allies all came overseas, and coal for our Allies, especially France and Italy, had also to be transported by sea. After a few months' working it was authoritatively reported that the losses of ships from enemy action while actually sailing in convoy were well below 1 per cent., although the tonnage concerned in the convoys ran into many millions. Some instances may be given of satisfactory engagements with submarines by escorts. In a typical case, a destroyer or other craft escorting a convoy would sight the periscope of a submarine ahead or abeam. Putting on full speed, the protecting vessel would head straight for the spot where the periscope had been seen. Usually the submarine would dive right under within a few seconds. If not, fire would be opened from machine-guns or other light weapons. On reaching the spot a depth charge, or perhaps two, would be dropped. Sometimes the effect could be ascertained with certainty, but generally the result was among that large class which Mr. Balfour, when First Lord, referred to as embracing every condition from practical assurance down to faint possibility. In any case, the destroyer would hang around until the merchant ships were well away from the place. Then, putting on full speed again she would overtake them and resume her station as before.

On one occasion a U boat was able to work in close to a convoy of about a score of vessels, one of which was torpedoed. An escorting destroyer, however, quickly fastened on the submarine's position, and racing across, dropped a depth charge before the underwater craft had had time to submerge to any great depth. The result of the explosion was blacker than usual, and the *débris* thrown up to the surface of the water left hardly a doubt that the submarine commander had paid the price of his temerity. A great variety of craft were pressed into the convoy service. The motor-launches which

\* See Vol. XIV., p. 171.

earned fame for themselves in connexion with the operations to block the harbours at Ostend and Zeebrugge, in April and May, 1918, also took their share of escort duties, and sometimes rammed enemy submarines with tremendous force. On one occasion the engines of the launch were stopped dead by the violence of the impact when the little boat ran down the submarine, but the purpose of the attack had been realized, for, in addition to the blow of ramming, six rounds were quickly got off from the machine-gun, and two hits were scored.

Berlin correspondent, on January 19, 1918. This article purported to describe how the Allies were convoying merchantmen through the war zone, and stated that various methods were in vogue for the purpose. The order in which the escorting warships sailed was determined by the importance, the size, the number, and other determining factors of the vessels convoyed. Describing a typical convoy of 10 merchantmen sailing from Great Britain to Norway, the correspondent showed by diagram how the 10 ships would be placed, in a double



AN AMERICAN TRANSPORT AND TWO ESCORTING DESTROYERS IN A FRENCH PORT.

Instances of a similar character could be multiplied from the official records, and naturally there were cases in which the U boat contrived to reach its quarry. Such an unfortunate occasion was the loss of the armed mercantile cruiser *Calgarian* (Captain R. A. Newton, R.N.) on March 1, whilst under convoy, off the north coast of Ireland. This vessel was not carrying troops, but naval ratings on leave or being transferred, and two officers and 46 men were drowned.

Certain details in regard to the organization of a convoy appeared in a Dutch journal, the *Amsterdam Algemeen Handelsblad*, from its

quarter line, or *en echelon*, midway between a line-abreast and a line-ahead formation. In a line-abreast formation (ships advanced side by side) an altogether too easy target for enemy torpedoes was presented. On the other hand, a line-ahead (or in "single file") formation would be easiest for the captains of the merchantmen, as each commander would only have to follow directly behind the vessel preceding his own. In such a case, however, the distance between any two ships must be at least 500 yards, and the length of the convoy would be such that its head and tail might lose sight of one another. The double quarter line plan offered the advan-







tage of shortening the distance, though it suffered from the drawback that a torpedo might, after missing a ship in one of the *en echelon* formations on the left, hit a ship in the other *echelon*.

In front of the convoy, and at least three or four nautical miles in advance of it, steamed a modern destroyer, provided with a submarine receiver, which enabled it to detect the sound of the screw of a submarine, inasmuch as the latter differed in a marked degree from the sound made by the screw of an ordinary steamer. Behind this destroyer followed the commander's ship, which was either a small cruiser of an older type or a so-called submarine destroyer, and which directed the speed, course and formation of the convoy. After the commander's ship came a torpedo-boat destroyer of an older class. Attached to it was a captive balloon, and from the basket suspended below the latter trained observers were enabled to overlook the surface of the sea to a wide extent, besides being able to detect submarines to a considerable depth below the surface. At the rear of the convoy there was another destroyer similarly equipped with a kite-balloon. The flanks of the convoy were protected by torpedo-boat destroyers moving in zigzag formation. Closer protection to the merchant ships was afforded by armed trawlers, some of which also steamed in the centre of the convoy between the two quarter lines. "While the procedure above described," concluded this correspondent, "is not invariably followed, it indicates some of the difficulties at present incurred in bringing vessels safely into port. It also shows how hard it is to shoot one or more vessels out of a convoy without being detected."

This description from an enemy source was corroborated by British journalists who in March, 1918, were permitted by the Admiralty to make a cruise with one of the Atlantic convoys. They set out from a southern harbour with a strange, motley-looking crowd of vessels, "with a camouflage appearance of the weirdest description," as *The Times* correspondent reported. When well out into the Atlantic the escort handed over the merchantmen to warships of another type, and turned about for home, having picked up a homeward bound convoy, which was escorted in its turn. These correspondents described the zig-zagging by the destroyers on either beam, and the precautions taken when the convoy ran into a fog-bank, which involved frequent speaking or whispering

on the sirens of the vessels to keep touch with each other. The use of aircraft—airships, seaplanes, and kite-balloons—in connexion with the convoy system was announced by Dr. Macnamara in the House of Commons, and the value of their cooperation was manifested.

An indication of the great attention being paid to the convoy system in Germany was afforded by a detailed article of Captain Brüninghaus in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* in January, 1918. This German Admiralty propagandist endeavoured to show that the convoy system constituted for Great Britain a very considerable automatic reduction of the tonnage which was already so scarce. The composition of the convoys, the reduction of speed to that of the slowest ship, the difficulties of navigation in large units, the hindrance to the use of the ships' guns, the unwieldiness of an escort, the almost complete impossibility of escaping quickly from submarine attacks—all these things were advanced by the German captain as being unfavourable to the escorts. Moreover, he said, the convoy system gave all the less security against submarine attack the more experience the U boats accumulated as to the methods of the protecting craft.

Many of the disadvantages thus referred to were eliminated by the establishment of schools for the merchant captains at the ports of departure. Here the masters were assembled and the organization of the little fleet explained by the convoying officer. The skippers were shown clearly by diagrams what was required of them, and were made acquainted with the procedure to be followed in case of enemy attack. The disadvantage of having to keep down the speed of the convoys to the speed of the slowest ship was more difficult to overcome. Here again, however, improvements were suggested by experience, and it became possible to group the vessels according to their speed. By classing the faster ships together, a great addition was made to their carrying capacity through the fact that a larger number of voyages in a given time were possible. The officers of the Mercantile Marine adapted themselves most successfully to the convoy system and it tended to bring the Navy and the Merchant Marine more closely together.

The transport of the American Army to France opened up another big undertaking in regard to convoy. This story has yet to be





#### SINKING OF THE TUSCANIA.

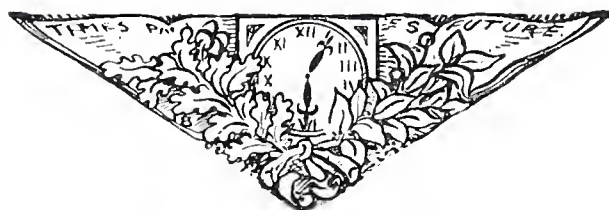
Friends of those on board awaiting news at the Anchor Company's offices in Glasgow.

told, but it is well to note in this chapter that the early battalions were brought over with striking success. The first contingent, convoyed by a force under Admiral Gleaves, withstood a submarine attack without any loss, and the handling of the ships reflected great credit on all concerned. The experience of the American transports went to prove the value of reliance on this old-world method of protection in its new development.

With the determined onset made by the German submarines against the United States convoys, it was hardly to be expected that no loss would occur. The destruction of the Anchor Liner *Tuscania* on the night of February 5, 1918, off the Irish coast, was, however, mitigated by the loss among the United States troops being comparatively

light. Of the 2,397 on board 2,187 were saved. On February 13, in answer to a question, Dr. Macnamara admitted that the *Tuscania* was torpedoed, but stated that the Admiralty were fully satisfied with the organization of the convoy. He gave the House the fullest assurance that every precaution was taken to safeguard the lives of the troops on board this and other ships in convoy.

The general system under which ocean-going trade was conducted in 1918 was somewhat similar to that of a railway: ships under convoy had become like trucks put into definite trains leaving at definite intervals for definite destinations, and occasionally dropping some of the trucks at intermediate stations, while the whole was protected by an armed guard against enemy attack.



## CHAPTER CCXL.

# THE FIGHTING ROUND VERDUN: AUGUST—NOVEMBER, 1917.

FOURTH STAGE OF BATTLE OF VERDUN—GENERAL VON GALLWITZ—GENERAL GUILLAUMAT—AREA OF THE FRENCH OFFENSIVE, AUGUST 20, 1917—ANALYSIS OF THE OPERATIONS—GUILLAUMAT'S VICTORY WEST OF THE MEUSE—THE FIGHTING EAST OF THE MEUSE—GERMANS BOMB HOSPITALS—HILL 304—AUGUST 26—THE ORNES SALIENT—SEPTEMBER 9—GENERAL VON KÜHNE'S OFFENSIVE—FIGHTING DURING SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER.

**B**ETWEEN the opening and conclusion of the Third Battle of Ypres two considerable battles were delivered by General Pétain on the French front from St. Quentin to Verdun. The first of them began on August 20, 1917, up to which date the operations of our Ally during 1917 were described in Chapter CCXXXII. and preceding chapters; the second commenced on October 23, the day before the great Austro-German offensive in Italy. That of August 20 may be considered to be the fourth and last stage of the terrible Battle of Verdun, which at intervals had been raging since February 21, 1916; the other terminated the Battle of Craonne-Reims, the initial moves in which had been taken by General Nivelle on April 15, 1917. Both were fought for limited objectives, and both resulted in decided victories for the French. Their importance and the importance of the Battle of Moronvilliers became apparent the next year when Hindenburg and Ludendorff, deprived as a consequence of these combats of advantageous positions for an offensive against the French, were obliged at first to throw their reserves against the British Armies.

What General Anthoine accomplished at Moronvilliers (see Chapter CCX.) has already been described; in this chapter the equally important work performed by General Guillaumat north of Verdun, and, in another, by Vol. XVI.—Part 201

General Maistre on the Chemin-des-Dames ridge, will be considered. While examining the achievements of Guillaumat and Maistre one must not forget that their successes depended largely on the pressure contemporaneously exerted by Anthoine, Gough and Plumer in the Ypres salient; that the French victories in their turn assisted the advance of the Allies in Flanders; and that the defeat of the German Crown Prince on October 23 and the subsequent days, bringing as it did the French within striking distance of Laon, indirectly helped the Italians to rally after their unexpected defeats at the end of October and the beginning of November, for it obliged the Germans to keep a large force ready to ward off a further French offensive and thus prevented them from sending more troops to help the attack on Italy. As will be seen from Sir Douglas Haig's dispatch of December 25, 1917, the British, French and Italian movements were already to a large extent co-ordinated before the strategic council of the Allies was established at Versailles.

It will be remembered that on Sunday, August 12, when British and French guns were pounding the German lines in Flanders preparatory to the opening of the second phase of the Third Battle of Ypres, a German *communiqué* reported that "on both banks of the Meuse the artilleries were fighting each other



with more intensity than had been usual lately." Then, on the next day, General von Gallwitz, commanding the German 4th Army in the Verdun sector, became convinced that General Guillaumat at the head of the French Second Army was about to take the offensive



**GENERAL GUILLAUMAT,**  
Commanded the French Second Army north  
of Verdun.

On the 13th the Commander of the German 25th Reserve Division, composed of Hessians, in an address to his soldiers, said: "The infantry must show itself worthy of its past exploits and of itself. Relying on its machine-guns, it will preserve its positions at any price and engage in hand to hand fighting. May new laurels be reserved for the Hessians!" Four days later (August 17) General von Dietrich issued an Order to his division which ran as follows: "You must expect to be attacked at any moment. The division must count only on its own resources. I hope that it will be self-sufficient, and that it will beat the enemy." On the vital importance of the menaced Hill 304 west of the Meuse the Commander of the German 29th Division insisted in an Order addressed to his troops. "It's the key," he said, "of the whole western front." The general at the head of another division was equally insistent. "If," he reminded his men, "the French ever take Hill 304 we are more than half lost, for if they once become masters of it nothing prevents them from

attacking wherever they choose." This somewhat exaggerated language—used probably to stiffen the *moral* of the troops—undoubtedly covered a very real anxiety on the part of the German Higher Command.

Further, to stimulate the men in the anticipated battle a letter attributed to a non-existent French prisoner was forged. The forger painted in the blackest colours the fate of all Germans who fell into French hands. The forged letter was printed and thousands of copies distributed among the German soldiers, not all of whom were, however, gulled by it. For some days before the battle several deserters came over carrying such letters with them. It is interesting to mention that it would seem that the Germans with their usual Machiavellian forethought had prepared the minds of their soldiers for the reception of the lies in this forged letter. At any rate, a few weeks earlier they had sent a Note (to the French Government) through the Swiss Government:

The following incidents have come to the knowledge of the Imperial Government. During the German offensive at Verdun the French General Maitrot called German officers who were prisoners of war, "brigands and swine," and with his own hands tore off their epaulettes and decorations, struck them, shoved, and jostled them, striking them in so doing. He shouted to them that he could have them shot, but that they were not worthy of that, and that he would have them hanged. He took no step to prevent the thefts to which the officers were subjected by French troops.

The Note mentioned several officer prisoners who would be able to give evidence in the case, asked the Swiss Government to obtain their evidence, and declared that unless there was a reply from the French Government before August 7 reprisals would be taken. General Maitrot, it may be added, replied with a flat denial of the charges.

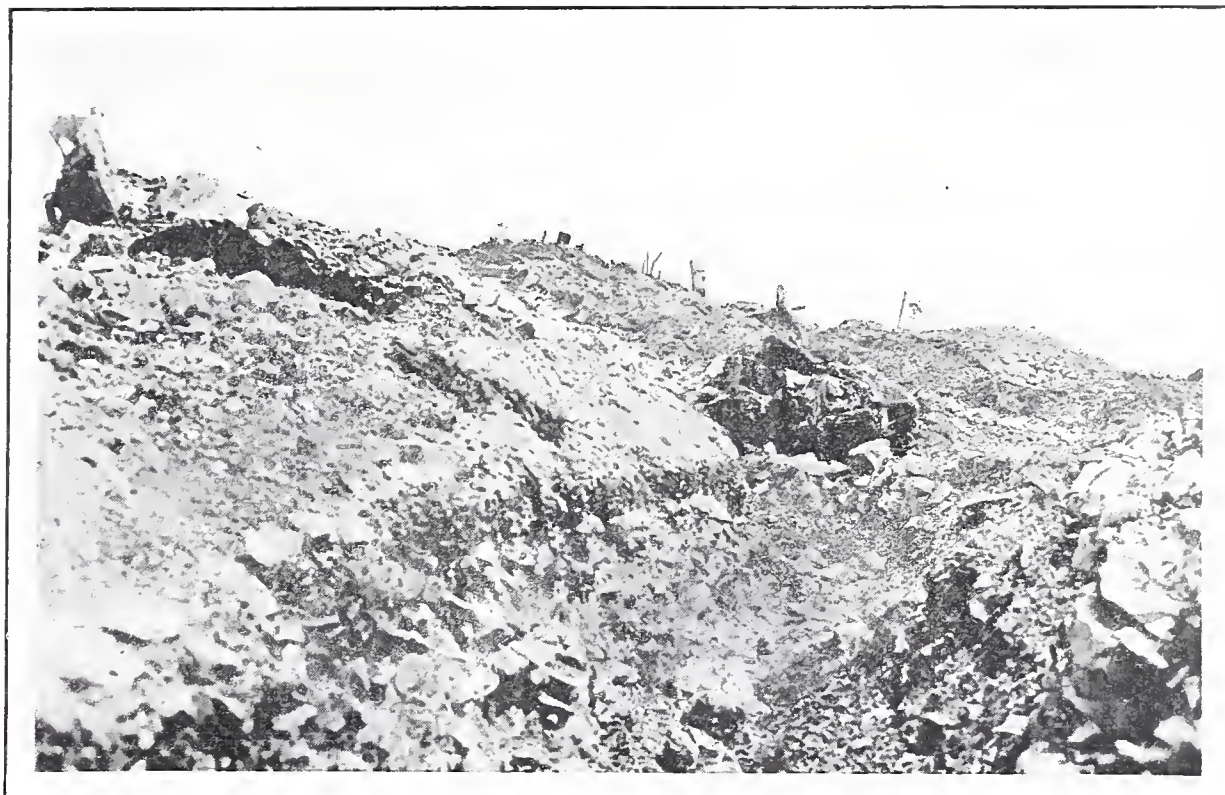
It is obvious from the above that the Fourth Battle of Verdun did not, like the First Battle of Cambrai in the following November, come as a surprise to the enemy. It was, therefore, an excellent test of the tactical methods of the opposing armies, which were both led by soldiers of great experience.

Von Gallwitz, now 65 years old, had before the outbreak of war been Inspector-General of the Prussian field artillery. In the summer of 1915 he had proved himself to be very much more than a mere expert in gunnery. After Maekensen's successful push through Galicia and recapture of Lemberg, he had been one of the generals entrusted with an army by Hindenburg when the latter made his last and success-

ful effort to evict the Grand Duke Nicholas from the Polish salient. At the head of some five corps he had, north of Warsaw, taken Przasnysz, and crossed the Narev, north-east of the capital of Poland. After the evacuation of Warsaw by the Russians, he had repulsed violent counter-attacks. Pursuing the retreating foe he had cut the Russian lateral communications north of the fortress of Brest-Litovsk, which speedily fell. He had next

had gained the confidence of such exacting masters as Hindenburg, Ludendorff and Mackensen, and he had played a distinguished part in two of the most decisive offensives of the war. Opposed to him, however, was a soldier of no ordinary merit, General Guillaumat.

Guillaumat was a typical soldier of the Third Republic of France. Like Joffre, Nivelle, Marchand and so many other officers, he had helped to extend and consolidate her Colonial



THE SUMMIT OF HILL 304.

been directed northwards and had secured Grodno, the important bridge-head fortress on the Niemen. From the Niemen he had moved south of Vilna, and his advance had been one of the main reasons why that important point had had to be abandoned by the Russians. In the autumn of 1915 von Gallwitz came under the command of Mackensen, then preparing the last and crushing invasion of Serbia. Of the two armies directed by Mackensen he was at the head of the left or eastern one. He forced the passage of the Danube west of the Iron Gates and joined hands with the Bulgarians attacking Serbia from the east. After the conquest of Serbia he was sent, in 1916, to Galicia to help stem Brusiloff's offensive, and soon afterwards was brought to the Somme region in August of that year. After the conclusion of the Battle of the Somme he had been sent to the Verdun region. Though up to the present he had won no remarkable victory, he

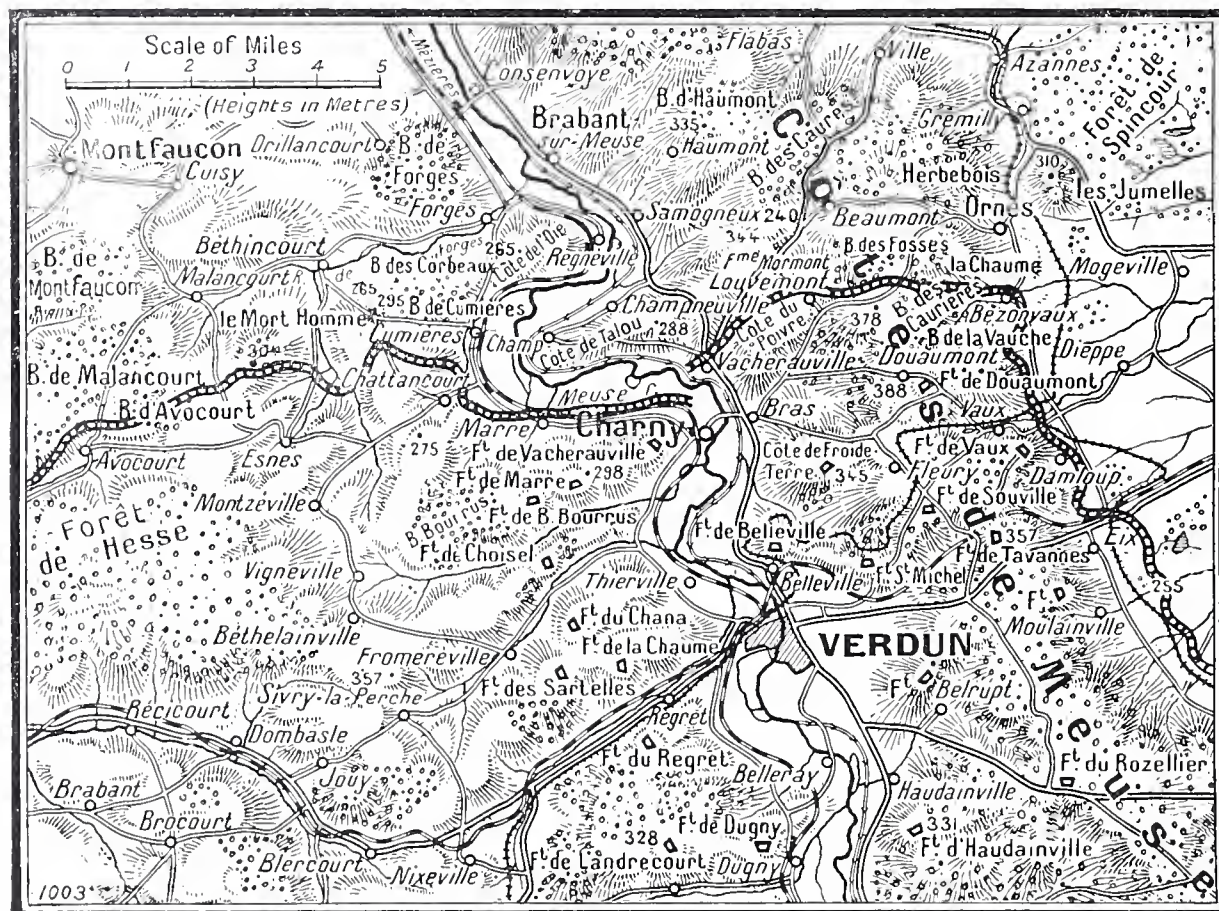
Empire. His military capacity had been developed far away from his native land in difficult situations, where he had found himself either alone or with only a mere handful of his fellow countrymen, in the midst of large hostile gatherings. He had also had good opportunities for studying the theory of war, as he had been employed in France on responsible administrative and educational work. He had always been a practical soldier, and it was in that capacity chiefly that he had earned his great reputation in the campaigns of 1914, 1915, 1916 and 1917.

Born in 1863, the year before the Hohenzollerns recommenced their assault on civilization, Guillaumat, who was in 1917 some 10 years younger than von Gallwitz, was still a child when Gravelotte and Sedan were fought. Destined for the army, he was educated at St. Cyr, the French Sandhurst founded by Napoleon in 1802. After leaving St. Cyr (1884),



where he had distinguished himself, Guillaumat joined the Foreign Legion. He took part in the Franco-Chinese War, and at the conclusion of peace was sent on a mission to China. In 1900 he commanded the garrison of the French quarter in Tientsin attacked by the Boxers. He was badly wounded, and received for his services the Legion of Honour. On his return to France Guillaumat, without passing through the Ecole de Guerre, joined the Staff. As Professor of Infantry Tactics, he afterwards

operations in the second half of 1915. Guillaumat has known how to inspire his troops with the true offensive spirit." The First Battle of Verdun had given him the chance of exhibiting his talents to the best advantage. His was one of the two corps at which the German Crown Prince had flung his numerically overwhelming forces. Guillaumat had remained imperturbable. He had carefully trained his men for just such an occasion. While his 2nd Division defended itself and counter-attacked, the 1st Division



THE FRENCH LINES AT THE OPENING OF THE OFFENSIVE, AUGUST 20, 1917.

lectured at the Ecole de Guerre, where his personality and ability overcame the prejudices of those who looked askance at a soldier from the Far East. He was next entrusted with the control of the Prytanée Militaire of la Flèche, the preparatory school for the sons of officers. Afterwards he became "Inspector of Infantry" and secretary to the Minister of War.

At the opening of the Great War, Guillaumat had been present at the Battle of the Marne and afterwards had served under Langle de Cary in Champagne and the Argonne. "He has energetically commanded one division in Champagne and another in the Argonne," wrote Langle de Cary. "Brought back to Champagne, at the head of an Army Corps (the 1st) he has skilfully assisted me in the course of my successful

under his personal direction for 40 days was engaged in making the entrenchments and entanglements that helped to baffle the enemy. At the Battle of the Somme the 1st Corps, with Guillaumat in command, had been on the right of Rawlinson's Fourth Army. Among other exploits, his troops, in association with the British, had captured Comblès. When General Nivelle became Commander-in-Chief of the French Army in December, 1916, he transferred the command of the Second Army to Guillaumat. Since then the latter had held this very important post.

The great offensive of April, 1917, in Champagne by Nivelle, which had absorbed the French reserves, had obliged him hitherto to confine his efforts to retaining the ground





PART OF THE BATTLEFIELD NORTH OF VERDUN AFTER THE  
ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENT.

which had been won in October and December, 1916. At last the opportunity had come when he would be able to rival the exploits of Pétain, Nivelle and Mangin. With Guillaumat was the illustrious General Fayolle,\* one of the heroes of the Somme, and, supervising the battle, was Pétain himself, the originator of the deadly and destructive artillery tactics which, since the Battle of Artois, in 1915, had both in attack and defence become the favourite method of the

\* General Fayolle commanded the group of armies including the Second, or Verdun, Army.

Allies for overcoming the elaborate fortifications of the enemy and for stopping his counter-attacks. To observe that method General Pershing, the Commander-in-Chief of the American forces, was present in an observation post. By his side was a French General who, like himself, had been a Military Attaché accompanying the Japanese Army in the Russo-Japanese War. Curiously enough, General von Etzel, one of von Gallwitz's subordinates, had been their companion during the campaign in Manchuria.



CARTING STORES.



The theatre in which Pétain's methods were again to be tested differed in almost every respect from that in Flanders, a fact which largely accounts for the better results obtained on the banks of the Meuse than were secured at the same period in the marshes and on the ridges north and east of Ypres. A broad and deep river with a canal by its side and the wide valley of the Meuse broke the continuity of the enemy's lines, and, the bridges across the river and canal being under the fire of the French artillery, von Gallwitz could not rapidly transfer

heavy rains. Guillaumat's troops on the 20th had not, as a rule, to wade to their objectives, as had Anthoine's, Gough's and Plumer's men in Flanders.

These advantages possessed by Guillaumat over Anthoine, Gough and Plumer were supplemented by another arising from the configuration of the heights west and east of the Meuse. The German Order of June 30, which has been referred to in previous chapters, had laid down that the front lines were only to be lightly held, and that reserves were to



MEDAL STRUCK TO COMMEMORATE THE DEFENCE OF VERDUN IN 1916.

troops from the heights on the east to those on the west or *vice versa*. The heights, too, as the numbers attached to them show—*e.g.*, Hills 304 and 344—were hills, and not mere hummocks like Hills 60 and 35. Troops defending their flanks and summits afforded better targets than the garrisons in the low-lying, “pill-boxed” area round Ypres. Moreover, owing to the succession of battles since February 21, 1916, the trees, vines, and bushes on them had been completely swept away. Before the war, the heights between which flowed the Meuse had been famous for the lovely forests and the vineyards which clothed their slopes. Now they resembled, in the language of an eye-witness, “Margate Sands.” In most places not even the blackened stumps of trees were visible. Lying exposed in billowy wastes of chalk, the Germans were far worse off than their comrades in the still wooded if marshy ground east of Ypres, athwart the road to Menin. The ground on the heights west and east of the Meuse, except the flat bottom of the river-valley, had, also, rapidly absorbed the

counter-attack the enemy when his waves had entered the deep defensive zone and had become disordered. On the right bank of the Meuse it was possible for von Gallwitz to obey the Order, because the summit of the heights extended back from his front at approximately the same level. But to the west, across the river, the slopes of the dominating Mort Homme and Hill 304 were divided from the next heights to the north by the valley of the Forges, a tributary of the Meuse, which enters it near the village of that name. Von Gallwitz was obliged between Avocourt Wood, west of Hill 304, and the Meuse to place the bulk of his troops in his first-line trenches and redoubts.

The valley through which flows the Esnes, running northwards to Béthincourt, where it joins the Forges, and severs the Mort Homme from Hill 304, further complicated the problem of the German commander. Hill 304 is slightly south of the twin heights (Hills 265 and 295) of the Mort Homme. If Guillaumat elected as a preliminary to storm Hill 304,





THE CREST OF THE MORT HOMME, PHOTOGRAPHED AFTER ITS CAPTURE BY THE FRENCH.

the French troops on its summit would look down on the Germans at the Mort Homme. If, however, as happened, he first carried the Mort Homme, his men would command with their fire the German communications with H.I. 304. There was the alternative of giving up H.I. 304 and the Mort Homme and recrossing the Forges. This was objectionable for two reasons. From the top of the Mort Homme the German observers had a clear view southwards and eastwards to Verdun and could see almost everything that the French were doing west of the city, and the same remark applied, though to a less extent, to H.I. 304.

There was a second objection to the evacuation of either height. Should the whole of the long ridge, at the northern end of which rose the Mort Homme, together with Hill 304, be secured by the French, their guns firing across the valley of the Meuse would enfilade and render the Talou and Poivre Heights untenable. As these were the last considerable vantage points near Verdun east of the Meuse which were still held by the Germans, it was imperative for von Gallwitz to retain them unless he was also prepared to retreat on the east bank of the Meuse.

A voluntary retreat on both banks of the Meuse was a solution equally unacceptable. Since October 24, 1916, the French had won two great victories on the Heights of the Meuse, and the Allies, breaking off the Battle of Flanders, might be seriously contemplating an offensive

designed for the recovery of the important Briey basin and its mineral deposits. To protect the iron-fields of the Briey basin it was necessary to keep the French pinned round Verdun.

Under these circumstances it is apparent that the task set von Gallwitz was more difficult than Sixt von Armin's in Flanders. Correspondingly, the problem to be solved by Guillaumat was easier than Anthoine's, Gough's and Plumer's. Von Gallwitz and his engineers had, of course, done their utmost to render impregnable the German line about to be assailed. It ran from the Avocourt Wood over Hill 304 and the Mort Homme to Cumières, a village on the railway which winds along the western edge of the Meuse Valley. Thence it crossed the valley, the river and canal, went up and along the Talou and Poivre Heights, and by the Fosses, Chaune and Caurières "Woods" reached the northern outskirts of Bezonvaux and the plain of the Woëvre. There it turned south and skirted the foot of the Meuse Heights, recrossing them north of St. Mihiel.

On the front of 11½ miles from the Avocourt Wood to Bezonvaux, which Guillaumat was attacking, barbed-wire entanglements, "pill-boxes," redoubts were accumulated to a great depth, and innumerable shell craters had been organized for defence. Under the saddle between the two summits of the Mort Homme was the Bismarck Tunnel, 80 ft. long, and behind it, going the whole length of Hill 265,





THE CROWN PRINCE TUNNEL,  
French troops in occupation after clearing out the Germans.

was the Crown Prince Tunnel, 800 ft. long by 12 ft. high, wide enough to take half a dozen men abreast. There were other and somewhat similar receptacles (*e.g.*, a tunnel in the Bois des Corbeaux east of the Mort Homme) in the chalky hills. As the French had gun-boats on the Meuse, the canal was drained by von Gallwitz's instructions, in order to prevent gun-boats from descending it and shelling the slopes of the heights in the westward loop made by the Meuse before Charny and Regnéville. The roads were broken by great pits. At various points along the line gas-cylinders had been installed. Anticipating that tanks would be employed, a number of anti-tank guns were in position. Squads of men with flame-throwers had been disposed at intervals, and shock troops were everywhere held in readiness for counter-attacks. In the ravines and gullies, and in the woods farther back, the French airmen detected the emplacements of no less than 400 batteries, which were supplemented by a large number of 12-in., 15-in., and 16-in. guns still farther back. In the front line there were many trench mortars and machine-guns. To hold off the French the German commander appears to have relied mainly on gas-clouds, combined with gas and lachrymatory shells.

On August 1 von Gallwitz had five divisions in the front between Avocourt Wood and Bezonvaux, three to the west, two to the east of the Meuse. By the evening of the 19th these had been reinforced, and there were four divisions in the Avocourt-Wood-Cumières sector

six miles along its face and three between the Meuse and Bezonvaux, on a  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles front. Five more divisions were in reserve. The mass of the reserves were round Beaumont, north of the Poivre Heights, and in the forest of Spincourt to the north-east. That the larger part (four divisions) of the German front line troops were deployed in the six miles of defensive zone between the Avocourt Wood and the Meuse shows the importance attached by von Gallwitz to the retention of Hill 304 and the Mort Homme. So long as those hills were in his hands he might still hope to reduce Verdun by severing its communications with the Argonne.

In infantry Guillaumat had been supplied by Pétain with an equivalent force to that of the Germans. His superiority lay in his artillery and aircraft. His aviators had gained the command of the air in the Verdun region and, with their aid, the French gunners since August 11 had been methodically wrecking the wire entanglements, "pill-boxes" and redoubts, and putting out of action enemy batteries. Against the subterranean refuges of the Germans huge 16-in. howitzers were employed, and 15-in. long guns shelled the enemy's reserves in the Forest of Spincourt and elsewhere and showered shell on convoys and troops on their way to the front. Each day since the 11th a map had been constructed from the aerial photographs, and on it were shown every trench, battery-emplacement, redoubt and entanglement, and every centre and channel

of supply to the enemy's positions. On these maps were marked the obliteration of the German defences. After sunset on Sunday, August 19, there was not a single strong point of the enemy, other than the tunnels, which did not show a marked deterioration from what it had been a week earlier. The French artillery under General Franiatte had done its work to perfection. For example, on the Mort Homme not a blade of grass was left, and nothing but earth, stones and chalk was now to be seen. The shell-holes overlapped and broke into each other everywhere over the two summits. A few twisted stanchions alone recorded the existence of what had once been an enormous wire entanglement. Even the Crown Prince Tunnel had not escaped untouched. A 16-in. shell from a howitzer had entered it and, as was afterwards ascertained, had killed 150 men of the garrison.

Taus meticulously had General Franiatte prepared the way for the French infantry. Like von Gallwitz, he had employed gas shells in prodigious quantities, and by forcing the Germans almost to live in their masks had shaken their *moral* before the advance began. Their losses in the preliminary bombardments had been very great\*, and, before the infantry battle

\* In Chapter CCXXXII. the aerial preparation for the battle by the French was described up to the night of August 17-18.

opened, von Gallwitz's divisions were already severely affected. Numbers, unable to stand the strain on their nerves imposed by the hurricane of shells from the French howitzers and guns, had deserted. Among them was a complete half-section with a non-commissioned officer at its head.

The roads by which the French reserves were brought up to the front line trenches bore witness to the indefatigable energy of the engineers and to the foresight of Guillaumat. At the end of 1916 the ground reconquered by Nivelle and Mangin on the right bank of the Meuse had been a trackless desert of shell holes. No trenches existed and the advanced troops had to take what shelter they could in the wide, open craters. When relieved, the men had to crawl and climb back to their base. Although under constant fire a complete change had occurred in the interval. All shell holes had, of course, not been filled in, and others—some created by the German shells and capable of containing a small house—had made their appearance. But excellent trenches with overhead protection had been constructed, and fine, broad roads up and down the chalky ridges had been cut and metalled. These roads and those west of the Meuse were cleverly screened. At the battle of the Yalu the Japanese had set the example of safeguarding the advance of troops by screening roads from observation. Guillaumat had



GERMAN OFFICERS CAPTURED IN THE TUNNELS OF MORT HOMME.



imitated Kuroki. Each avenue of access passed between continuous canvas and brushwood screens and hangings of rush matting. At every 20 yards or so narrower strips of canvas were carried across and well above the road to baffle the eyes of enemy aeroplane observers. Thanks to these precautions the assaulting infantry were able with little loss to arrive within striking distance of the enemy.

Sunday, August 19, was a fine day. Behind the desert of the battlefield columns of troops were proceeding northwards on the dusty roads. In the fields around the harvests were half garnered and the orchards full of fruit. Only a few of the French officers knew absolutely that the struggle was about to begin, but there was a general air of expectancy about the troops. High up above, German aeroplanes were trying to pierce or pass over the barrage from the anti-aircraft guns and to dodge the sentinel machines patrolling the sky. One at least got through, but, promptly pursued, was unable to return and report on the French preparations. It was hit, canted over, and for nearly three minutes continued to roll over, meanwhile falling slowly. When French soldiers hurried up to the spot where it fell they found that the pilot was dead and the observer badly wounded.

Meanwhile the French guns, directed from aeroplanes and a long line of sausage balloons,

continued mercilessly to pound the German lines. In the evening the bombardment increased in violence. From the Avocourt Wood for a stretch of 13 or 14 miles to a point well north-east of Verdun the whole series of ravines and ridges, one behind another, became a smoking furnace. The level height of Hill 304, the summits of the Mort Homme, and across the river the long slopes of the Talou and Poivre Heights, and farther back the ruins of Beaumont and the Bois des Caures behind it, where there was a nest of German batteries, vomited smoke and flames. The shell explosions followed one another so rapidly that a curtain of smoke from them hung over the length and breadth of the enemy positions. As the light of day faded and darkness set in, the smoke became invisible, but the ceaseless roar, the line of spouting flames in front, their pale reflection in the black sky and also that of the flashes of the guns, the thousands of tongues of flame in the gulleys and ravines behind the French lines, deafened the ears and dazzled the eyes of onlookers. Where the white chalk had been ploughed up on to the surface of the ground, the rush of flame at each discharge was reflected in its course for hundreds of yards beyond the muzzles of the pieces, exactly as if it were passing over a great sheet of water. The lower air was lit up



A FRENCH SHELL DUMP NEAR VERDUN.



*[French official photograph.]***A SCREENED ROAD.**

by the yellow light of the French and German flares. Occasionally the awe-inspiring spectacle was diversified by the coloured stars of rocket signals or by an intense glow of rose-pink and orange where a French or German shell had set fire to an ammunition dump.

The time for the advance had been fixed by Guillaumat at 4.40 a.m. on Monday, August 20. By then the hills were dimly outlined and the valleys were filling with a thick, grey mist. It was barely possible to hear even the whine of the shells when the French went over the parapet behind a stupendous barrage and made for their objectives. Every gun in every battery was being worked with eager haste by its team. The infantrymen marched steadily forward through the gas-laden air at the strictly regulated progress of 25 metres a minute, wearing their gas helmets. In vain the Germans plastered with shells the ground before and behind them. As the light became clearer the fire-lit bank of smoke reappeared, and when the sun began to shine the air seemed suddenly to be alive with scores of aeroplanes. One of the German machines swooped on a French sausage balloon. The observer flung himself out, and in his excitement jumped on the wrong side, so that the parachute caught in the ropes of the basket and he was left suspended below it with his legs dangling. He was unable to free himself until the men, tugging with all their might, had hauled down the balloon itself.

"It will be a battle over by lunch," wrongly

predicted Napoleon on the morning of Waterloo. General Guillaumat might safely have promised that the battle of August 20, 1917, would be over before the handful of inhabitants in the almost empty Verdun were taking their coffee and rolls. So marvellously had his artillery performed its work that the French in an hour and a half reached all their objectives. Two feats of the French gunners are specially worth mentioning. A naval gun at its second shot demolished a tripod mast at Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, 10 miles away, which had been erected for wireless or observation purposes. By rafales of high-explosive shells the shock troops in Mesopotamia trench, south-east of Beaumont, were literally blown to pieces. The French losses, it may be added, were light because by good fortune the German barrage was put down on the assembly trenches a few seconds after the men had left them in open order and were marching forward.

As has been already indicated, the plan of Guillaumat on the 20th did not include the storming of Hill 304. That operation was to be left till a later date. Nor did he propose to attack at the edge of the Meuse Heights south of Bezonvaux. Complete precautions, however, had been taken against a German counter-attack from the Woevre in that region, while the push was being made northwards. The French line was here facing east and almost at right angles to the advance. That von Gallwitz did not assault it, is evidence of Guillaumat's foresight. Across the river on



the extreme left beyond the Avocourt Wood there was little need to concentrate large forces, because the French line running thence to the Argonne possessed no prominent salient anywhere near the battlefield. General Linden's Army Corps on the extreme left were safe from any flank attack.

At 4.40 a.m. the 25th Infantry Division began



#### HAULING DOWN A CAPTIVE BALLOON.

the clearance of the site of the Avocourt Wood. They pushed rapidly across it and entered the southern outskirts of the Bois de Malancourt, which with the lines east of it north of the Col de Pommerieux were simultaneously successfully assaulted by the 26th Division. As the latter was already on the Col de Pommerieux to its east, this advance brought the two French divisions abreast of the western face of Hill 304. Troops from the Col de Pommerieux assaulting it and the Bois Camard on its north-western slope would by reason of the capture of the Avocourt Wood be secure from an attack in the rear.

In the meantime General Martin's 21st Division had, east of Hill 304, routed General von Dietrich's Prussian 6th Reserve Division, composed of Brandenburgers, defending the summits and tunnels of the Mort Homme. The havoc wrought there by the French guns has already been described. Except for the tunnels the Brandenburgers were fighting in the open. When Martin's men rushed up the slopes most of the Prussians bolted from the craters and made their way over the summit of Hill 295. Some entered the Bismarck Tunnel; others descended to Hill 265 and sought refuge in the Crown Prince Tunnel, where 700 or 800 officers and men were cap-

tured, including the whole of a regimental staff and an engineer officer. A few survivors recrossed the Forges, but the division of von Dietrich was practically wiped out. Its three regiments lost in prisoners alone 2,794 men and 69 officers. The casualties caused by the preliminary bombardment may be gathered from the statement of a prisoner that in his regiment each company had had 45 men in the front line, and that the average strength of a company was reduced by a single day's shelling to 20 men. This victorious advance of General Martin completed the virtual isolation of Hill 304. From Hill 295 his troops could fire across the valley of the Esnes at the northern end of the summit of the former hill; from Hill 265 they could command the slopes of Hill 304 descending into the valley of the Forges.

Between the Mort Homme and the Meuse the famous Foreign Legion, which we last saw at the Battle of Moronvilliers fighting through the Labyrinth to Auberive-sous-Suippe, once more earned distinction and the hatred of the enemy. The Foreign Legion, in which, it will be remembered, Guillaumat in early life had served, had, in the 30 years which preceded the war, fought in Dahomey, Tonkin, Madagascar and Morocco. When hostilities commenced it had been the rallying point for chivalrous neutrals anxious to assist the chief of the Latin nations and of the European republics in its struggle for life with Teutonic barbarism. These volunteers, with some of the battalions of the Legion, were amalgamated into two "regiments de marche." They were afterwards joined by many of the soldiers of the Garibaldi Legion when that body, on the entrance of Italy into the war, was dissolved. Fifty-one nations contributed to the "regiments de marche"—Swiss, Spaniards, Dutchmen, Americans and Egyptians. Even Persia was represented by the cultured Parisian, Lieutenant Nazar Aga. "All these venal neutrals," wrote a German journal, "should be treated as franc-tireurs and receive no quarter." The newly created force received its baptism by fire on May 9, 1915, when in broad daylight at the Battle of Artois it stormed the White Works near Neuville-Saint-Vaast. Far in advance of the troops to its right and left, it penetrated even into Souchez and Carency, which for want of support it was obliged, however, to abandon. At the Battle of the Champagne-Pouilleuse in the following September the two regiments lost so heavily that they



were reorganized as a single "regiment de marche" and placed at the disposal of General Gouraud, the "Lion of the Argonne." The next year (1916) at the Battle of the Somme the "regiment de marche" stormed Belloy-en-Santerre. Its exploits at the Battle of Moronvilliers (April 17-19, 1917) have been already recounted.

To this *corps d'élite* the ex-legionary, Guillaumat, had assigned for objectives on the 20th and the following days the ruins of the village of Cumières, the stumps of the wood of that name and those of the Bois-des-Corbeaux to its north, and the Goose Hill (Côte de l'Oie) and Hill 265, both overlooking Forges. Hill 265, on the edge of the Meuse valley, was one of the dominating points between the Meuse and the Forges rivulet. It was the same height as the lower of the Mort Homme summits. Under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Rollet the legionaries at 4.40 a.m. set out. Cumières and its wood were quickly carried and organized. Entering the Corbeaux Wood they secured the tunnel there, and, getting ahead of the French barrage, even reached the southern bank of the Forges.

Thus the operation west of the Meuse had entirely succeeded. So severe had been the enemy's losses that it was not till the evening that von Gallwitz was able to deliver counter-

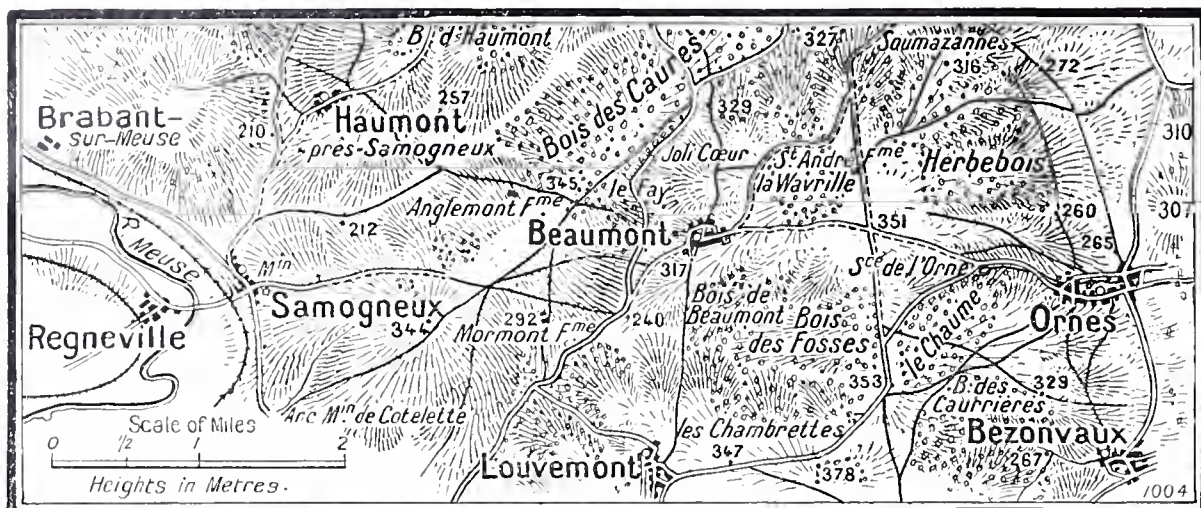
attacks. These were directed at the Avocourt Wood and the Mort Homme and were of extreme violence. But the French artillery, machine-guns and rifles mowed down the masses of the enemy. During the night of the 20th-21st the Germans again endeavoured to recover the Avocourt Wood. Once more they were beaten back, losing heavily.

Simultaneously with the attack to the west, the French attack was launched to the east of the Meuse. The French objectives along the river bank were the Talou Ridge in the loop and the village of Champneuville below it, opposite Cumières. Farther east Hill 344, the dominating height of the Poivre Ridge, the fortified Mormont Farm and, across the Vacherauville and Beaumont road, Hill 240, north of Louvemont had to be taken. These three points formed practically a straight line of eminences between the village of Samogneux—the next objective in the river valley after the Talou Ridge and Champneuville were taken—and the south of Beaumont. It was important to secure them because Hill 344 commanded Samogneux and because the road to Beaumont passed between Mormont Farm and Hill 240, from which, moreover, an attack might be made against the western flank of the Bois de Beaumont. At a later date it was intended that this wood



LOOK-OUT IN A TRENCH ON THE VERDUN FRONT.





SCENE OF THE FIGHTING EAST OF THE MEUSE.

should be cleared of the enemy. Before that operation could be properly undertaken the Fosses Wood to its south and east had, also, to be gained. This and the Chaume Wood on the Ornes side of the road from Louvemont to Azannes formed the objectives on the extreme right. The capture of Chaume Wood would enable the French, already north of Bezonsvaux and in the Caurières Wood to its west, to attack Ornes from two sides. Possessing as they did Hill 378, between Louvemont and Bezonsvaux, they had in this sector an excellent observation post looking towards the remains of the Fosses and Chaume Woods and the shattered concrete defences there.

What happened east of the Meuse on August 20 can soon be recounted. Thanks to the admirable work of the French gunners, the French 126th Division, under General Matthieu, quickly drove the enemy from the Talou Ridge in the loop of the Meuse and from Champneuville below it. To the right of Matthieu's men, battalions of the 123rd Division, commanded by General St. Just, captured Hill 344 and Mormont Farm, while on their right General Caron with the 165th Division and General Deville with the 42nd, aligned from the north of Louvemont to the north of Bezonsvaux, stormed Hill 240, approached Beaumont on the south-east, and entered the Bois-des-Fosses and the



RUINS OF CUMIÈRES.



Chaume Wood. A violent attempt by the enemy to recover Hill 344 failed hopelessly, as did a counter-attack during the night of the 20th-21st delivered north of the Caurières Wood against the Chaume Wood. In the evening the 123rd was replaced by the 14th Division.

In the course of the battle of the 20th over 5,000 unwounded prisoners, including 116 officers, were captured. The French airmen brought down 11 German machines and played a brilliant part by raking enemy trenches with machine-gun fire and dispersing troops preparing to counter-attack. Anti-aircraft guns smashed two other German aeroplanes. Von

of yesterday and last night. This morning a strong drumfire preceded the infantry attack.

The French occupied without fighting the Talou Ridge, east of the Meuse, which, since March of this year, had been given up as a line of defence and which had only been occupied by outposts. These were withdrawn during yesterday in accordance with our plans and without disturbance from the enemy.

At all other places on the wide battle front the fighting is in full swing.

EVENING.—The battle before Verdun is going in our favour.

On the western bank of the Meuse the enemy only succeeded in penetrating into our defensive zone at the Avocourt Wood and at the Mort Homme. Elsewhere his repeated assaults were everywhere repulsed.

To the east of the Meuse the enemy was either completely repulsed before our fighting position or driven back in a counter-attack.



THE TALOU RIDGE.

Gallwitz's airmen also had distinguished themselves, but in a different way. On the eve of the battle they had bombed three clearing-station-hospitals. In one they wounded women nurses: in another they killed a doctor and wounded three others. By the irony of fate they killed nine German wounded in the third station.

Such was the battle of Monday, August 20. On that day the German Command issued their account of it, which differs from the French in the usual German way.

The battle before Verdun began early this morning with strong French attacks on both banks of the Meuse from the Avocourt Wood to Caurières Wood (over 14 miles).

The artillery duel continued without interruption, and with the greatest intensity throughout the whole

The reckless bringing up of masses of infantry on a front of over 20 kilometres (12½ miles) against our strong fighting forces has cost the French exceedingly heavy losses.

On the 21st a revised version of the story was issued

The first day of the battle before Verdun had the same result for the French as the great English attacks in Flanders had for the English on July 31 and August 16. The superiority in material and the reckless use of men could not break the German fighting force. Against a small local success must be set the failure of the attack on a front of over 20 kilometres [12½ miles.]

The powerful artillery preparation for the great thrust which the French Army was to conduct at England's command began on August 11. From Avocourt Wood as far as the eastern fringe of Caurières Wood our positions were turned into a wide, desolate crater-field by the enemy's artillery fire, which increased to the most extreme intensity during the few hours before the attack.





HILL 304: TRENCHES OF THE ZOUAVES; OFFICERS WATCHING THE SECOND WAVE OF THE ATTACK.

During the early morning of the 20th the French infantry, who were in dense attacking waves, came forward to the assault in deep *echelons* behind the artillery fire, which had been lifted forward to protect them.

At many places the native and white French troops penetrated into our defensive zone, in which every step forward had to be wrested from our fighting troops by heavy losses. Bitter hand-to-hand fighting and powerful counter-attacks drove back the enemy almost everywhere.

The mighty struggle swayed to and fro throughout the whole day. On the western bank of the Meuse only the Mort Homme Height and the southern fringe of the Corbeaux Wood remained to the French. There we are situated in close proximity to the northern slope of the hill.

On the eastern bank the fighting line has been still less deflected. Only on Height 344, south-east of Samogneux, and in the Fosses Wood has the enemy won a little ground.

The measures taken by the leaders proved to be splendid; as also the typical tenacity and bravery of the infantry. The artillery is also deserving of full praise; the effect of its destructive fire against the enemy forward works appreciably impeded the advance to the attack. It also took a prominent part in our successful defence. The other arms, particularly the pioneers and the airmen, materially assisted in the satisfactory termination of the day. The losses of the French infantry, in relation to the masses used, are extraordinarily high.

The battle before Verdun has not terminated; this morning fresh engagements developed at various places. Both leaders and troops anticipate a favourable conclusion.

EVENING.—Before Verdun at isolated points the fighting is still proceeding. On Hill 304 we repulsed strong French attacks.

On Tuesday, August 21, Guillaumat halted

the troops between the Avocourt Wood and the Mort Homme and those east of the Talou ridge. The Foreign Legionaries captured Goose Hill and Hill 265 with the redoubt on its summit. Meantime General Matthieu's troops had overrun the entire system of fortified trenches connecting Hill 344 with the village of Samogneux on the east bank of the Meuse. The reduction of this village had originally been fixed for the next day, but Matthieu's victorious troops could not be restrained from now attacking it. To help them in the reduction of this village the Legionaries in the afternoon descended from the Bois des Cumières and assaulted Regnéville, on the west bank opposite Samogneux. They bombed their way into Regnéville and captured four guns. From a hillock Guillaumat watched their progress. Regnéville was secured. During the 20th and 21st the Legionaries had taken 680 prisoners, 8 guns and numerous machine-guns. At the same time Matthieu's men captured Samogneux.

Towards nightfall the Germans violently counter-attacked round Hill 304 and the Mort Homme. Some enemy elements entered the French lines, but were speedily evicted, and 80 prisoners were captured. During the day

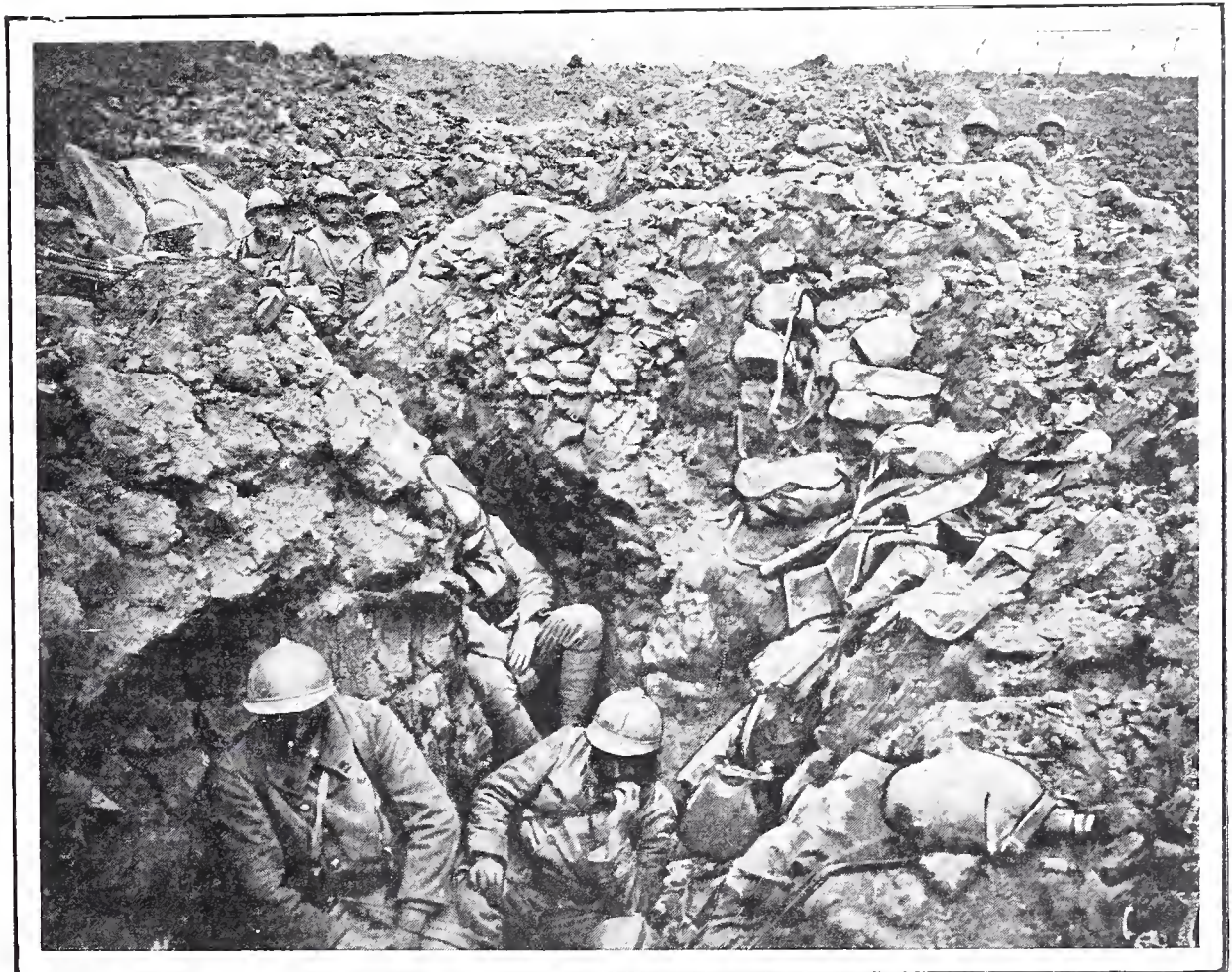


repeated assaults were also made by von Gallwitz at Hill 344 and north of Mormont Farm. The French artillery and infantry fire inflicted heavy losses on the assailants, and broke up the waves of Germans, none of which reached the French positions. To the north of Caurières Wood attacks, accompanied by squads with flame projectors, met with no greater success. Not counting the units captured in the German shelters during the 21st and 600 wounded Germans being cared for in French ambulances, the total of prisoners

were dropped on the sheds, in which all the beds were occupied by wounded men. Three sheds immediately started blazing, while the medical staff endeavoured to rescue the wounded who had not been struck by projectiles or yet reached by the flames.

The aeroplanes came back and at a still lower altitude fired with machine-guns on the rescuers. Hospital No. 6 was also struck by bombs. In order to prevent the spreading of the fire the staff hastened to destroy the footbridge joining the two hospitals. The airmen fired on them with their machine-guns. Seven of the staff were killed and about 20 wounded.

In the glare of the fire the Geneva Red Crosses painted on the roofs of the buildings showed up most plainly in the night, but the German airmen none the less continued their work, and came back a third time to bombard



HILL 304: THE DEMI-LUNE TRENCH, THE FARTHEST POINT OF THE FRENCH ADVANCE.

had by now swelled to 6,116, including 174 officers.

It was on the night of the 21st that the German airmen committed another outrage. The special correspondent of the Havas Agency may be left to tell the hideous story. His narrative was amply confirmed by the correspondents of *The Times* and other journals present.

Yesterday the Germans scientifically bombarded three of our hospitals several times. Towards 10 o'clock in the evening several German aeroplanes flew at a height of less than 200 metres [660 feet] in the district behind Verdun over the clearance hospital No. 6 and another hospital situated on the other side of the road and connected by a wooden footbridge. Four incendiary bombs

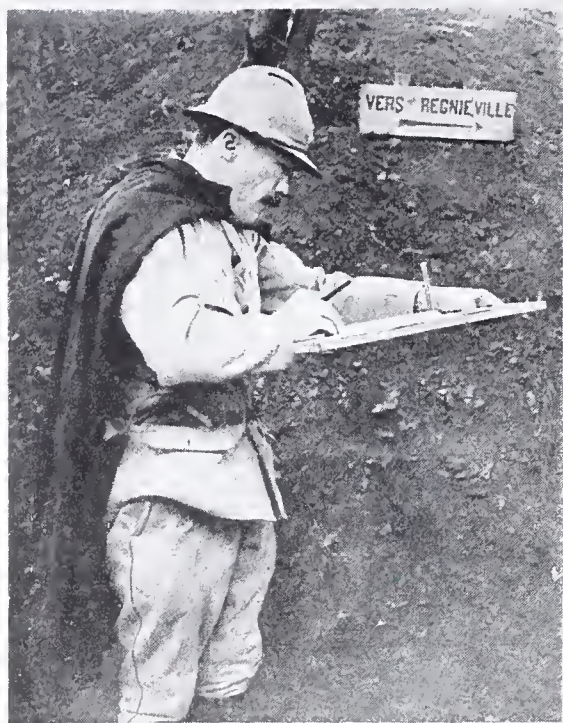
were dropped on the sheds, in which all the beds were occupied by wounded men. Three sheds immediately started blazing, while the medical staff endeavoured to rescue the wounded who had not been struck by projectiles or yet reached by the flames.

It was in identical conditions that another hospital at a different point was bombed, and here, too, we have to mourn the loss of victims.

The reverses suffered by the Germans on the 21st were so serious that the Higher Command decided to modify and enlarge their statement published in the evening of that day. The tale of the defeat of the French at Hill 304, where in fact the Germans had been defeated, was expanded. "In the south-



eastern part of Avocourt Wood and on the knolls east of it," the *communiqué* of the 22nd admitted that "the enemy, after repeated and vain storming attacks, gained a footing." But the *communiqué* went on to declare that "on Hill 304 all attacks, as in the case of those which were begun from the Mort Homme, failed under our fire and against the tenacity of the brave defenders." The capture of Goose Hill and Regnéville by the Legionaries was concealed beneath this sentence.



FRENCH DRAUGHTSMAN MAPPING  
THE GERMAN TRENCHES NEAR  
REGNÉVILLE.

"Thrusts," it was said, "directed from the ridge east of the Corbeaux Wood against the Forges Valley were repulsed." With regard to the advance down the right bank of the Meuse, though it was allowed that the French had "forced their way into the southern part of Samogneux," the loss of the fortified zone from Samogneux to Hill 344 was ignored and the area of conflict shifted to the region between Hill 344 and the Bois des Fosses, south-east of Beaumont, where the Germans and not the French had been on the offensive. "The dense masses of the French," the reader was told, "which assaulted our lines from Hill 344 as far as the Vacherauville-Beaumont road and in the Fosses Wood, both during the forenoon and afternoon, were bloodily repulsed. The losses of the enemy were heavy, and the French Command had to replace several of the ten attacking divisions by fresh troops."

The number of divisions hitherto employed by Guillaumat was, of course, exaggerated. Counting the "régiment de marche" of the Foreign Legion as one, at the most eight divisions seem to have been engaged on the 20th and 21st.

Wednesday, August 22, and Thursday, August 23, were uneventful days; but the French artillery shelled the slopes of Hill 304 with the utmost intensity. A strong point north-east of Mormont Farm was stormed by the French on the 23rd and some 17 prisoners secured. On that day Guillaumat took stock of his captures in men and material. The number of prisoners was found to be 7,640, including 186 officers and 600 wounded—a considerably larger number than those taken by the British (6,100 prisoners, including 133 officers) on the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres, and more than three times as many as were taken by the Allies on August 16 in the second phase of that battle. Twenty-four guns of all calibres and over 200 machine-guns were among the booty. Nine other guns were destroyed.

These very satisfactory results were enhanced by the operations of the French on Friday, August 24. Two days of concentrated fire on the long ridge of Hill 304 had reduced its garrison to a state of paralysis, and the French barrages had prevented the fresh division sent by von Gallwitz to the Forges on the 20th from reinforcing the weary shell-shocked troops. Nevertheless it was still a most formidable position to attack. It was seamed with trenches facing to all points of the compass. These trenches were connected by others and by numerous tunnels. Flanks and summit were strongly fortified with redoubts and "pill-boxes." The approaches to it could be brought under the fire of heavy guns in the woods to the west, north and east, and of those in pits on the hill of Montfaucon north of the Malancourt Wood.

By the evening of the 23rd, however, the French artillery had silenced most of the batteries, filled in the trenches and smashed the concrete defences. The French, too, already occupied the whole of the southern side of the ridge, and were at places on the southern edge of the summit. To the west, close to the Bois Camard, they were astride the saddle of the Col de Pommerieux, with their flank and rear well protected by their comrades in Avocourt Wood. On the Mort Homme side their trenches ran along the slopes, descending



to the Esnes brook, and continued on a low, little spur, like the tail of a beaver, extending northwards to the Forges at the southern outskirts of Béthincourt. This spur and that to the west of it above Malancourt were, moreover, commanded by the French from the northern and southern of the summits of the Mort Homme, and the eastern flank of Hill 304 almost up to its summit was under direct fire from the southern and higher (Hill 295) of the Mort Homme eminences.

Accordingly, the "key of the whole Western Front," to quote the German General's words, had become untenable. At 4.50 a.m., after a sharp struggle, it was occupied by troops of the two divisions of General Linder's Army Corps. Only some 100 prisoners were taken: the enemy during the previous night had retreated to a series of fortifications below the northern crest, stretching across the Esnes-Malancourt road, through the Bois Camard to beyond the Bois Eponge. These "pill-boxed" entrenchments were on the west known as the Vassincourt and Peru, in the centre as the Boot and Bois Equerre and on the east as the Bois Eponge, Souvin and Alsace works. During the morning these and the long-disputed Bois Camard were stormed, and Linder's men reached the south bank of the Forges between Haucourt (a hamlet south of Malancourt) and Béthincourt.

While Linder was attacking them from the west and south the German lines between the Bois Camard and the Alsace work had been turned on the east. French troops directed by General Corvisart—a name with Napoleonic memories attached to it\*—had pushed on the Forges from the Mort Homme up the ravine of the Esnes, over Cumont plateau, and down the slopes of the Bois des Corbeaux. They, too, reached the south bank of the Forges. By sunset the only strong points held by the enemy on the right bank of the Forges were the Lorraine work and two other redoubts close to Béthincourt. All three were stormed during the night of August 24-5. The total of unwounded German prisoners now amounted to 8,100.

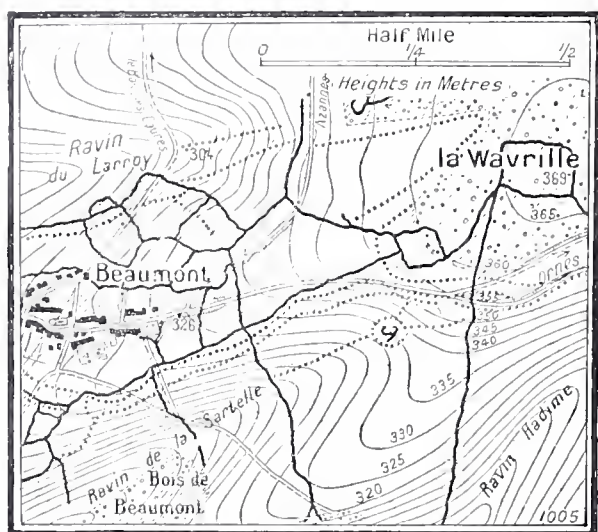
Since August 20 the French line had been swung forward to the south of Haucourt, Béthincourt and Forges. It now embraced Cumières and Regnéville, and the loop of the Meuse; from the north of Samogneux it proceeded south of Beaumont by Hill 344 and Fosses Wood to Hill 329, south of Ornes and north-west of Bezonvaux. The French had mastered the main line of the heights from Hill 304 to Goose Hill on the western bank of the Meuse, and they had a good view over the enemy's positions. On the right bank the

\* A Corvisart was the physician of the great Napoleon.



FRENCH SOLDIERS TAKING UP QUARTERS IN SAMOGNEUX.





#### BEAUMONT AND WAVRILLE.

defences of Verdun could no longer be overlooked. "The battle is finished," the correspondents with the French Second Army were told on the 24th.

The same day M. Painlevé, the French Minister of War, sent to Pétain this letter:—

Dear General,—The brilliant feats of arms at Bixschœtte and Kortekeer and the fighting which has been in progress since Monday on the banks of the Meuse, without the heroic watch on the Chemin-des-Dames failing anywhere, fill the country and the Army with just pride. I send to you, your generals, your officers, and your magnificent troops the Government's admiration and recognition of your deeds, to which I join my most lively and most affectionate congratulations. You, who were known already as the glorious defender of Verdun, have now completed your work, throwing

back definitively the enemy from the crown of heights whence he threatened the inviolate town.

I have the honour to inform you that, on my proposal, the President of the Republic confers upon you the dignity of Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour. I wish to express to you, with the thanks of the nation and Army, the profound joy which I feel in announcing to you this news.

Pétain, in his turn, sent the following order to the Second Army:—

Officers, non-commissioned officers and men,—The whole French Army has been following with emotion your glorious deeds and congratulates you upon the successes you have achieved. You have in a single bound passed over the historic ground where so many of your comrades during long months resisted the enemy inch by inch in his arrogant advance on Verdun.

In the order the French Generalissimo congratulated and praised General Guillaumat and his staff.

They were soon to be again deserving of congratulation. On Saturday, August 25, the French advanced posts reached the outskirts of Béthincourt. East of the Meuse two enemy surprise attacks were repulsed with appreciable loss, and during the night of August 25-6 the French artillery concentrated its fire on the plateau, wood and village of Beaumont and on that part of the Fosses Wood still in the enemy's possession. From Hill 344 the French front ran eastwards sharply downhill past Mormont Farm to the Vacherauville-Beaumont high road. Then it went along a ravine between the Louvemont and Beaumont Woods up on to a



GERMAN PRISONERS EXHIBITING THE "PARADE-MARSCH" BEFORE GENERAL MATTHIEU.





GERMAN PRISONERS TAKEN AT HILL 304.

plateau once crowned by the Fosses Wood, which it crossed north of Les Chambrettes Farm on its way to Hill 329, which is between Bezonvaux and Ornes. The crumpled and wooded ground south-east of Beaumont village was the chief objective of the French gunners, and the bombardment was as thorough and searching as that on the night of the 19th-20th. Particular attention was shown to the nest of German batteries in the Wavrille Wood, round Hill 369, north-east of Beaumont, where von Gallwitz had secreted reserves of infantry.

The artillery preparation which had begun some days earlier and ended at 4.45 a.m. on Sunday, August 26, was the prelude to the advance of the divisions of Generals Caron and Deville on a front of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Mormont Farm to Chaume Wood, which lies between Fosses Wood and Hill 329. At the hour stated the French troops "went over the top" and ascended the steepish slopes. As the plan annexed will show, their task was a difficult one. Not only had the ruins of Beaumont been converted into a veritable fortress, but they were the centre of an elaborate zone of entrenchments, one of the outworks of which was the Mesopotamia Trench, running at the rear of the first of the enemy's positions between the Beaumont and Fosses Woods. Moreover, Hill 369 was

considerably higher than Hills 344, 347 (near Les Chambrettes Farm), 353 and 329, though not as high as Hill 378, just east of Hill 347.

The attack at once succeeded on both wings. The French worked up the Vacherauville-Beaumont Road, along the western edge of the Beaumont Wood to the verge of the village, and drove the Germans from the whole of the Fosses Wood. In the centre alone, where the Mesopotamia Trench and Beaumont Wood bristled with machine-guns, was serious resistance encountered. This was not overcome till the sun was high in the heavens. About noon, Caron's and Deville's men emerged from Beaumont Wood. Masses of the enemy were launched at them down the Wavrille slopes. Caught by the French barrage they were sent flying back and the slopes were covered with the dead and dying. The French line had been advanced a thousand yards. In the evening and the night of the 26th-27th other, and equally ineffective, counter-attacks were delivered by von Gallwitz. The unwounded prisoners in the hands of Generals Caron and Deville amounted to over 1,100, including 32 officers.

In their *communiqué* of August 27 the German Higher Command pretended that Guillaumat had attacked from the Meuse to the Chaume Wood; that he had been everywhere repulsed west of the Vacherauville-Beaumont





General Pétain. M. Poincaré. M. Painlevé.  
THE PRESIDENT PRESENTS THE GRAND CROSS OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR TO GENERAL PÉTAIN.



road, that Beaumont and the Beaumont, Fosses and Chaume Woods had been at first stormed by the French and had been afterwards recaptured, and that three, not two, French divisions were engaged on the 26th.

That day, it may be mentioned, raids were made by the enemy north and north-west of Vaux-les-Palameix, east of Troyon, on the Meuse Heights south of Verdun. They were probably designed to relieve the pressure on von Gallwitz by suggesting that the Germans were about to attack between Verdun and St. Mihiel. These raids were repeated in the same region on the 27th.

On August 27 the weather broke, and the struggle for the time being degenerated into an artillery duel. The total of unwounded prisoners taken in the Beaumont region since August 26 had, thanks mainly to the repulse of German reconnoitring parties on the 28th, increased by the 29th to 1,470, including 37 officers. Nearly 10,000 prisoners—approximately the same number as were taken by the Allies in Flanders and at Lens during August—had been already procured by Guillaumat's offensive.

The President visited Verdun on the 29th in order to bestow on Pétain the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour. In an eloquent speech, delivered in the presence of M. Poincaré under the walls of the citadel, M. Painlevé, the Minister of War, dwelt on the importance of the recent success. "This glorious victory," he said, "was the corollary of the exploits daily performed by the French troops in the Chemin-des-Dames, of the brilliant performances of Anthoine's divisions in the plains of Belgium, of the heroic battles fought by the British Army in Flanders, and of the important progress made by the Italians on the rugged chain of Monte Santo and the rocky plateaux of the Carso."

The absence of any reference in the speech to Russia was noticeable. Four days before, at the great conference of delegates summoned by the Provisional Government to Moscow, General Korniloff had denounced the undisciplined state of the Russian Army, and had vainly demanded to be invested with the necessary powers for arresting the dissolution of that once powerful force.

A few hours later battalions representing the divisions which had won the battle were reviewed by the President, with whom were the Minister of War and Generals Pétain and

Guillaumat. A high wind was blowing, and the torn and tattered flags of the regiments fluttered in the breeze. Before the soldiers, some of whom had come straight from the trenches in their ragged and muddy uniforms, marched past, the President handed to General de Fonelare, commanding the 15th Corps, the star of grand-officer of the Legion of Honour, and to Generals Martin and Fraihatte the ribband of commander. In the afternoon the President and Minister, accompanied by Pétain and Guillaumat, went over the ground reconquered by the Second Army. An Order of the day, signed by Pétain, was also issued praising not merely individual members, but the whole of the Staff attached to General Guillaumat.

The lull in the infantry fighting continued at Verdun up to September 8. There was a skirmish north of the Caurières Wood on August 30, and there were others on the Meuse Heights three days later, while still another German reconnaissance near Vaux-les-Palameix was repulsed on September 6. Each day, however, the hostile artilleries were abnormally active, and bombing by French and German aeroplanes was a frequent occurrence.

At 10.30 p.m., on September 5, enemy machines again descended on the hospital at Vadelaincourt. Up to 3 a.m. the next day they hovered above it, dropping projectiles every 20 or 30 minutes. Nineteen inmates of the hospital and adjoining buildings were killed and 26 wounded. While these inhuman performances were taking place, French squadrons in return loosed a ton of bombs on the railway station at Thionville and nearly one and a half tons of explosive on that of Woippy, near Metz.

On September 7 the German *communiqué*, in addition to announcing that a Würtemberg regiment had south of Beaumont forced a way into the French lines and in a hand grenade encounter driven out the occupants, also stated that Badeners had penetrated into Caurières Wood and returned with prisoners. The *communiqué* added that the German barrage had hindered an attack at the Fosses Wood.

The next day, Saturday, September 8, Guillaumat ordered General Passaga, with troops of his Army Corps, which consisted of the divisions of General Monroe and Riberpray, to attack the enemy on the right bank of the Meuse between Beaumont and the northern





THE HOSPITAL AT VADELAINCOURT: REMAINS OF BEDSTEADS.

corner of the Caurières Wood.\* The front to be assaulted was in length about 2,750 yards, but the result of the previous fighting had so alarmed von Gallwitz that he had placed there two divisions in the front line trenches and kept in readiness behind the line Beaumont-Ornes no less than four more for their support. It will not be forgotten that at the opening of the Fourth Battle of Verdun, while four German divisions held the position between the Avocourt Wood and the Meuse, only three were deployed between the right bank of the Meuse and the north of Bezonvaux. Since August 20, after the loss of the Talou and Poivre Heights, the forces east of the Meuse appear to have been quadrupled; prisoners from 12 German divisions were taken by the French in the fortnight's fighting. Doubtless the lengthening of the German front occasioned by the extension of the French lines to Samogneux had had something to do with this, but, as the concentration of half von Gallwitz's effectives between Beaumont and Ornes shows, the enormous addition to the German forces was directly brought about by the recognized superior quality of the French troops. Here, at all events, one German division could not be counted on to resist the advance of one French. Von Gallwitz had no option but to defend the ground attacked. His base for a blow at Verdun down the west bank of the Meuse had been lost. If he evacuated the high ground behind the line Beaumont-Ornes he would lose his most con-

venient jumping off point for another leap at Verdun on the east bank of the river. Already he had been pushed back a couple of miles or so and his outposts were about seven miles from Verdun.

The aim of Guillaumat, content with his position between Samogneux and Hill 344, was to reach a line south of the Beaumont-Ornes road whence he could assault, if necessary, the enemy on the heights to its north. In any case this was almost certain to bring on a battle in which the killing of Germans—an object always to be kept in view by the Allies—might be accomplished on a large scale.

On the right he proposed to capture the summit of Hill 329—the Caurières Spur—overlooking Ornes and the isolated twin hills beyond it. Those hills were of extreme value to the Germans as they barred access to the plain of the Woëvre at this point. In the centre, General Passaga was to evict the enemy from his remaining strongholds on the site of the Chaume Wood and to advance up the road from Louvemont to Azannes as far as the foot of Hill 351, half way between Beaumont and Ornes and south east of the Wavrille Wood and Hill 369. If ultimately Hill 351 were taken, the road from Beaumont to Ornes would be cut and it would be possible to attack from two sides the ruins of either village. Anticipating such a danger the enemy's engineers had, however, run down the slopes a series of trenches from north to south across the Beaumont-Ornes road. Farther east, athwart the Louvemont-Azannes road, they had arranged a most complete

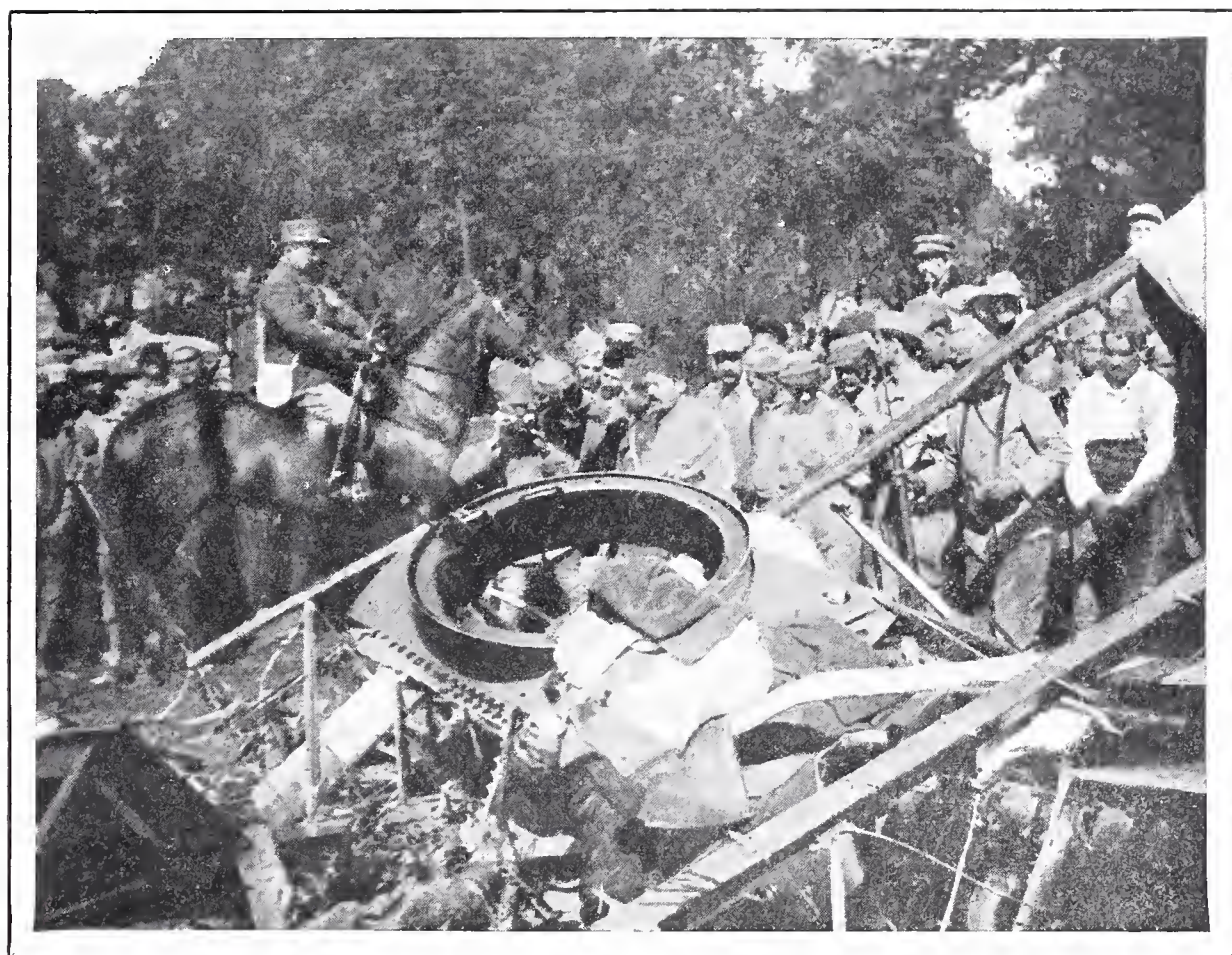
\* Caron's and Deville's Divisions had been relieved since the former battle.



system of defence, based largely on a particularly strong centre of resistance, the Lama redoubt, approach to which from the north was by the Thibet communication trench.

The Louvemont-Azannes road divided the Riberpray from the Monroe division of Passaga's corps. General Monroe's troops were ordered by Guillaumat to move up from the Fosses and Beaumont Woods and to occupy the

his beaten divisions and violent counter-attacks were soon afterwards delivered by the Germans. The French guns, machine-guns and rifles wrought havoc in the enemy's masses, but here and there there was stubborn hand to hand fighting. In the end the French retained the conquered positions. At dawn on Sunday, September 9, patrols ascertained that between Beaumont and the Louvemont-



[French official aeroplane photograph.]

#### GERMAN AEROPLANE BROUGHT DOWN AT VADELAINCOURT.

heads of the ravines—especially that of the steep Hadime ravine—between Beaumont and the Louvemont-Azannes highway.

The weather on the morning of September 8 when General Passaga launched his attack was very misty. Through the mist Monroe's men behind the French barrage stole forward. One after another the gulleys were cleared of the enemy. Picked detachments, in a number of desperate combats with bomb and bayonet, killed and wounded the garrisons of the deep dug outs of the Hadime Ravine. On their right the Riberpray Division, which had distinguished itself at the battle of Moronvilliers, stormed the Lama redoubt, threw the enemy out of the Chaume Wood and captured Hill 329. In these operations some 800 prisoners were taken. At nightfall von Gallwitz reinforced

Azannes road alone over a thousand Germans had been killed in the struggle. Their corpses lay in front of the new French lines.\* But among the French dead was unfortunately the gallant General Riberpray.

Undeterred by his failure between Beaumont and Ornes the German leader, at 3.30 a.m. on Sunday, September 9, opened a violent bombardment on Hill 344, south west of Beaumont. If Hill 344 on the Poivre Height, where the ridge from the Caures Wood meets that from

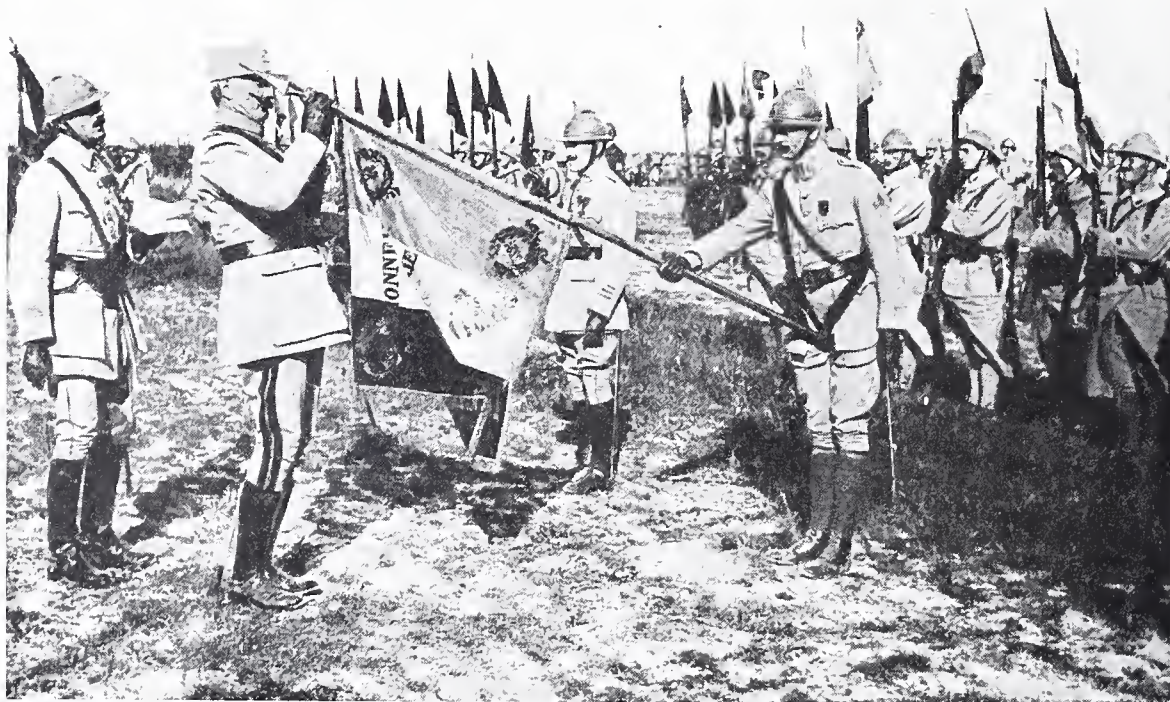
\* The news of Passaga's victory seems to have brought Ludendorff to von Gallwitz's headquarters.

The well-informed *Journal des Débats*, on October 12, stated that von Gallwitz was relieved of his command after a visit by Ludendorff on September 9. After the succession of defeats inflicted on von Gallwitz by Guillaumat it would have been but natural that Hindenburg's lieutenant should wish to judge for himself the tactics of the beaten general.



Beaumont, could be carried, the Talou ridge and the ground in the loop of the Meuse might be recovered. "The lines east of Samogneux, on the heights of Hill 344," an order to the German troops detailed for the assault ran, "must be completely recaptured." At 5.55 a.m. seven battalions belonging to two divisions, with a third division in immediate support, attacked Hill 344 from two sides in a converging movement, on a front of under a mile and a half. They were confronted on the west and north by General Hennoque's division of Bretons, whom we last saw at the battle of Moronvilliers. The eastern slopes of the hill were

ing to a counter-attack. Hennoque's and Philipot's men, preceded by a barrage, met it half way. There was a brief and bloody struggle and the Germans were sent flying back to the ravines whence they had started. The ground was strewn with the dead and wounded. Von Gallwitz, in desperation, now turned his attention to the sector between Beaumont and Ornes. Five times on Sunday afternoon and during the night of the 9th-10th the German troops were sent in to recover the ground abandoned the day before to Monroe and Riberpray. The counter-attacks were delivered with incredible fury, but failed to



GENERAL PASSAGA DECORATING THE FLAGS OF HIS VICTORIOUS REGIMENTS. [French official photograph.]

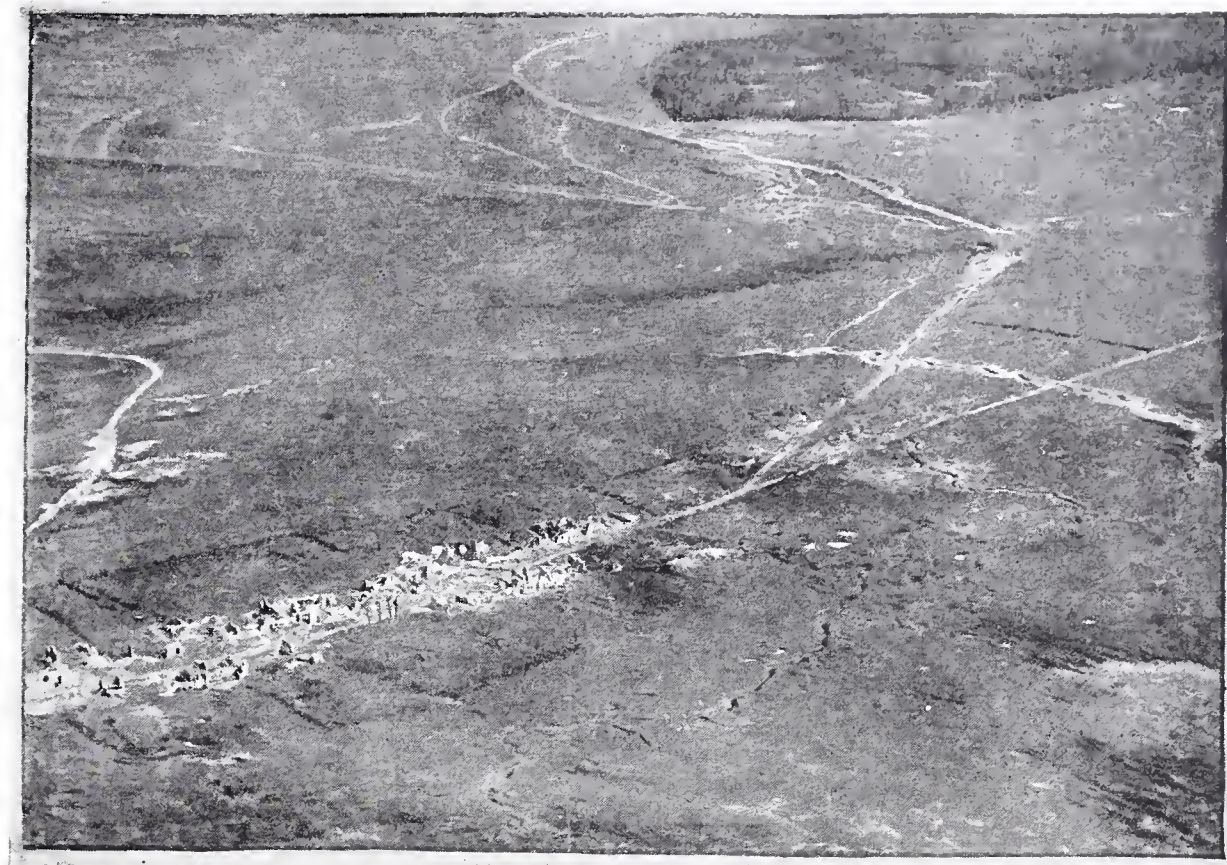
held by General Philipot's division, one of the famous "Ace" divisions, every regiment of which had the right to carry the coveted "fourragère."

On the left the Germans were stopped by barrages of shells and bullets, and only reached the French position at a single point near the Tacul ravine, north-west of the hill. By 11.30 a.m. the Germans were in full retreat; but north and east of Hill 344 they met with a certain amount of success. Thanks chiefly to an avalanche of gas and heavy shells, they carried the first French line, but by 1.30 p.m. Philipot's troops, assisted by the Bretons, had regained them. Soon after French aviators reported that the enemy reserves were advancing

to effect their purposes. The troops of Monroe and Riberpray and the French guns behind them inflicted terrible losses on the German masses. Everywhere the latter were repulsed, and on the morning of Monday, September 10, the French proceeded to consolidate their position.

The duel on September 9, like those on the preceding days, between von Gallwitz and Guillaumat had again gone in favour of the French General. General von Kühne, who had till then commanded a group of armies east of the Meuse, took the place of von Gallwitz. Needless to say, however, the German *communiqués* gave little or no indication that fresh and bloody reverses had been suffered by von





[French official photograph.]

### RUINS OF BEAUMONT: IN THE DISTANCE THE WOOD OF WAVRILLE.

Small groups of German reinforcements can be seen on the road.

Gallwitz on September 8 and 9. These documents, which teem with "terminological" and other inexactitudes, are appended:—

**SATURDAY AFTERNOON.**—The artillery battle before Verdun continued yesterday.

On the eastern bank of the Meuse the artillery fire repeatedly increased to drumfire. Shortly before nightfall a French attack was launched between Samogneux and the Beaumont-Vaucherauville road. Thanks to the tough resistance and thrusting force of our infantry and the defensive fire of our artillery an enemy success was prevented. Their storming waves, which were followed by strong reserves, were repulsed. Where they penetrated our battle troops threw themselves against the enemy troops and drove them back, some French companies being wiped out. The enemy losses were heavy.

During the night the fire continued with undiminished intensity, and early this morning increased to the most intense drumfire from Beaumont to Bezonvaux. Since 6 a.m. fresh infantry engagements have been in progress.

**EVENING.**—On the north-eastern Verdun front the French attack at the Fosses Wood and north-west of Bezonvaux failed.

At the Chaume Wood, where the enemy had gained ground, fighting is still in progress.

**SUNDAY AFTERNOON.**—Before Verdun fighting took place throughout the day on the east bank of the Meuse. The first waves of the French attacking in the morning, between the Fosses Wood and Bezonvaux, broke down under the fire of our trench garrison. In a fresh assault, favoured by the fog, the rear echelons of the enemy succeeded in gaining ground in the Chaume Wood and at Ornes.

This village, according to the statement of a captured officer, was the objective of the French attack. Here they encountered the powerful counter-thrust of our reserves, and were thrown back southwards. In

the evening a fresh thrust by our battle troops completed the success.

As a result of hard fighting the enemy was in general driven back to his positions of departure, but he retained a small part of the ground gained in the southern portion of the Chaume Wood and on the ridge extending to the east thereof.

Of three French divisions, which suffered the most sanguinary losses (according to the statements of prisoners, reaching 50 per cent.), over 300 prisoners remained in our hands. Our infantry fought excellently, the effect of the artillery was very good, and valuable services were performed by our airmen.

**EVENING.**—On the right bank of the Meuse there has been a lively artillery duel.

**MONDAY AFTERNOON.**—On the northern Verdun front local infantry engagements took place in the course of the day. To the east of Samogneux our shock troops advanced into the French lines on both sides of Hill 344. They inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, and returned with more than 100 prisoners. In addition, they liberated a train bearing riflemen, who, surrounded by the French since September 7, had repulsed all the enemy's attacks with heroic tenacity.

Bitter fighting with hand grenades and cold steel took place in the Fosses and Chaume Woods. No change in the situation was brought about by the French attacks.

**EVENING.**—Before Verdun a strong French attack at Chaume Wood failed in the morning.

It will be observed that a wholly imaginary battle, naturally ending in favour of the Germans, was alleged to have preceded—on Friday, September 8—the *real* engagements on Saturday and Sunday, which combats were distorted into German victories! In a further *communiqué* issued on September 11 it was also





RUINS OF A FLOUR MILL AT SAMOGNEUX.

alleged that "strong French forces yesterday morning (Sunday, September 10) attacked from Fosses Wood to Chaume Wood"; that "the French penetrated into our fighting zone to the south of Wavrille Wood and were repulsed by a counter-attack," and that "on the remainder of the front the French storming waves broke down, with heavy losses, under our defensive fire. During the course of the day," the German story continued, "oft-repeated attempts of the enemy to attack failed every time. During the pursuit," the *communiqué* concluded, "we pushed our lines forward at some points." The real battle was sandwiched between two fictitious ones. On the 10th, as on the 7th, Guillaumat did not take the offensive. The German Higher Command in 1914 had boldly suppressed the Battle of the Marne, which was converted by them into an affair of outposts; they now at will created battles. Whole volumes might be filled with their foolish falsehoods!

The operations on September 9 terminated the Fourth Battle of Verdun. On the west bank of the Meuse the French had recovered Hill 304 and the Mort Homme, Cumières and Regnéville. They had advanced to the south bank of the Forges, and they were almost on the same line that they had held on the morning of February 21, 1916. Then they were north of the rivulet in front of Malancourt, Béthincourt and Forges.

By the middle of April, 1916, the Germans, at a vast expense of men and munitions, had driven them back to the south of the Forges, but Hill 304 and the loftier of the Mort Homme summits and Cumières were still in the possession of Pétain. At the Second Battle of Verdun (May 1-June 30) his successor, Nivelle, had lost Hill 304, the remainder of the Mort Homme and Cumières, but the enemy had been unable to reach the line Avocourt-Esnes-Charny. It will be seen that Guillaumat in four days had practically accomplished in 1917 what the German Crown Prince had a year before taken as many months to perform. It was a most remarkable achievement. In the course of the 13 months or so which had elapsed since June 30, 1916, the German engineers had made the defences of Hill 304, the Mort Homme, and their surroundings infinitely stronger than they had been in February, 1916, but they had nevertheless fallen before the French assaults. The gains of the Germans on the west bank of the Meuse in the First and Second Battles of Verdun had been virtually cancelled.

Across the river this had not been the case. From the river bank between Consenvoye and Brabant-sur-Meuse (the latter village is a couple of miles north-west of Samogneux) the French trenches on February 21, 1916, had run across the Meuse Heights to the north of Ornes and had descended south eastwards into the Woëvre



as far as Buzy, where they had turned southwest and remounted the Meuse Heights just east of Les Eparges. By the end of the following June, Ornes and the whole salient in the Woëvre had been evacuated by the French; and the latter had been driven out of Brabant-sur-Meuse, Samogneux, Champneuville, and Vacherauville. The German front from the south of Vacherauville crossed the heights south of Poivre Hill and, embracing Fleury, reached the eastern edge of the heights just west of Eix. At its centre near Fleury the enemy was barely three miles from the encircling of Verdun itself. As Brabant-sur-Meuse and Ornes are about eight miles from Verdun, the situation for the French, though Nivelle had stemmed the rush, was still, in the summer of 1916, dangerous. The Third Battle of Verdun, which was fought by General Mangin on the east bank of the Meuse between October 24 and December 17, had restored Vacherauville to the French and brought back the French line across the heights to the northern environs of Bezonvaux, about a mile south of Ornes. But the Talou ridge in the loop of the Meuse, more than half of the ground conquered by the enemy since February 21, 1916, on the Meuse Heights, and the whole of the lost salient in the Woëvre, was still in German hands.

The victory of Guillaumat had not extended the French lines into the Woëvre nor had he recovered the position on the Meuse Heights occupied by the French on February 21, 1916. In front of Ornes he was close to but south of Beaumont, and north of Samogneux he was still about two miles from the original front. With the forces at his disposal he had advanced probably as far as it was safe to do. Had he moved farther north of Samogneux, his left wing would have had to carry the Malancourt and part of the Montfaucon Wood and recover the north bank of the Forges. Otherwise the Germans on the left bank of the Meuse would have enfiladed the French moving onward from Samogneux on Brabant-sur-Meuse. Now, if the original French position had been on or beyond the northern end of the Meuse Heights, it might have been worth while for Guillaumat to attempt to reach it. But those heights extended far to the north of Brabant-sur-Meuse. With the ever-growing danger of German and Austro-Hungarian Armies being brought from Russia to France in the immediate future, the prudent course was to halt, as he did, on the strong position between Samogneux and Hill 329.

It was not to be expected that the Germans on the Meuse Heights would remain quiescent



GERMAN WOUNDED ON HILL 304.



after their defeat. West of the river, where the French threatened no vital spot in their line, they were content to be on the defensive between the Fourth Battle of Verdun and the Battle of Malmaison (October 23), and, with the exception of a couple of enemy raids easily repulsed, nothing occurred worth recording. But during the same period von Kühne, the successor of von Gallwitz, concentrated all his efforts on the recovery of the ground lost east of Samogneux and west of Bezonvaux. The presence of the French so near to the twin hills of Ornes, beyond the Meuse Heights at the edge of the plain of the Woëvre, was the main cause of the activity displayed by the German leader. These humps (Hills 307 and 310) overlooked the Forest of Spincourt, which had played in the Battle of Verdun much the same part as the Forest of Houthulst had in the Battle of Ypres. In the Spincourt woods the enemy had concealed his reserves and batteries. The Ornes hills had, also, been the pivot of the German attack delivered on the Meuse Heights in February, 1916. They were considerably lower than several of the points (*e.g.*, Hills 353 and, south of it, Hill 378) already gained by the French. If Guillaumat extended his salient much farther northwards on both sides of the Louvemont-Azannes road, which ran through Ornes below the western slopes of the hills—especially if he dislodged the Germans from the loftier Wavrille Heights—the Ornes pivot would be rendered insecure.

It is, therefore, not surprising that between Beaumont and Ornes the offensive was promptly taken by von Kühne. On this sector descended a never-ending torrent of shells, and there was many a strongly disputed infantry combat. Von Kühne quickly set about his task, which was to dislodge the French from the salient in front of Ornes, or, as we shall call it, the "Ornes salient." On September 11 he twice attacked the eastern side of the plateau, once crowned by the trees of the Chaume Wood. This plateau formed the northern extremity of the side of the salient facing the Woëvre. Three days later (September 14) after a violent bombardment, he again assaulted it on a front of 500 yards. His Badeners, after a hand to hand combat, entered the French first line trenches and captured, if the German *communiqué* is to be believed, 300 prisoners. In the night of the 14th–15th our Allies, however, counter-attacked and regained the greater

portion of the trench-elements from which they had been ejected.

There was now a cessation for some days of the infantry encounters. In the interval the German Higher Command intercalated two more imaginary actions. On the 19th and 20th of September they published accounts of them in their *communiqués*.

German Official Report, September 19 :

FRONT OF THE GERMAN CROWN PRINCE.—On the eastern bank of the Meuse the French, after short and powerful firing preparation, advanced to the attack on a front of nearly two miles west of the Beaumont-Vacherauville road. The first storming waves of the enemy, yielding quickly to our defence fire, were followed by deeply-serried reserves, who rushed forward in renewed attack. This strong thrust also broke down under our fire and in hand-to-hand fighting, and our artillery found specially good objectives in the retreating masses. The day again cost the French heavy losses without bringing them the slightest advantage.

German Official Report, September 20 :

FRONT OF GERMAN CROWN PRINCE.—Before Verdun the French attacked yesterday morning and evening near Hill 344, east of Samogneux, where the day before they sustained a sanguinary check, again without any success.

These imaginary "victorious repulses" of the French were followed on September 24 by a serious and very real defeat for the Germans. The previous night batteries mostly stationed between Ornes and Azannes and to the north of it had poured shells into the French lines from the south-east of Beaumont to the north of Bezonvaux. In the morning of the 24th the Ornes salient was assaulted between those points. The attacks on the left of the French below the former village and on their right looking towards the plain of the Woëvre were subsidiary to the blow delivered at the centre on a front of a mile and a half.

The French trenches were here on the northern edges of the Bois-des-Fosses and the Bois-de-Chaume. Facing the interval between these woods, but behind the French lines, was Hill 353, the highest spot on the crest. It was slightly higher than Hill 351, facing it on the next ridge to the north, along which ridge ran the road from Beaumont to Ornes. It was not, however, so elevated as the highest point in the Wavrille Woods. But if Hill 351 were stormed by the French the more northern ridge back to Beaumont and the Wavrille Woods could be attacked by them from the east.

To pierce, then, the French lines and recover the summit of Hill 353 was, for defensive no less than for offensive purposes a sound idea. Von Kühne in the previous days by barraging

all the approaches from the south to the sector had done his utmost to isolate it. In order that the French Colonial troops below Beaumont should not during the action send assistance to the coveted point, units of the German 48th Reserve Division, issuing from the environs of Beaumont, were to keep the coloured troops fully employed while detachments of the 78th Reserve Division, by assaulting the east face of the salient north of Bezonvaux

French guns, machine-guns, and rifles, but in the centre some of the Germans effected a lodgment. A furious combat ensued. The French garrisons gradually got the better of the intruders; the shock-troops of the Rohr battalion were sent into the fray; but they could do nothing more than cling to the point where penetration had taken place. After some hours of desperate fighting, some of the surviving Germans managed to retreat, but



SEARCHING GERMAN PRISONERS.

were to draw any local reserves away from Hill 353. For the attack in the centre and the carrying of the hill four battalions of the Prussian 13th Reserve Division and a battalion of shock-troops were employed. This battalion was named after Major Rohr, the officer credited with the introduction of the *Sturmtruppen* system. For once the shock-troops appear to have followed, not led the assault. The Reservists were to break a way through the French defences, and the Rohr battalion, hard on their heels, was to make for the strongly defended summit of the hill.

On the morning of the 24th the attempt to carry out this programme was made. Following a powerful barrage, wave after wave of infantry flung themselves on the French defences. The waves were thinned by the

more were sent back prisoners to the French rear.

Nor were the subsidiary attacks more successful. The assault on the eastern face of the salient was easily repulsed, and south-east of Beaumont the French Colonials with a bayonet charge in the open routed the men of the German 48th Reserve Division before these latter even reached the French trenches. The Germans coolly claimed to have been the winners in this region, where they asserted that they had gained a quarter of a mile of trenches, and they also declared that the assault north of Bezonvaux had been a "complete success." They admitted, however, which was the fact, that the fighting round the north of the Chaume Wood had "not altered the situation." Some hours afterwards, the





THE KING OF THE BELGIANS DECORATING OFFICERS OF THE ARMY OF VERDUN.

attempt south-east of Beaumont was renewed, this time squads with flame projectors being employed by the enemy, who was again repulsed, losing heavily. The number of prisoners captured by the French on the 24th amounted to 121, including 4 officers. A German raid in the Beaumont region on September 27 was also beaten off.

In the last week of September the Verdun battlefield was visited first by King Albert of Belgium and then by King Victor Emanuel of Italy. On September 23, the day before the action between the south-east of Beaumont and the north of Bezonvaux, the former, with President Poincaré, reviewed detachments from nearly all the divisions which had fought at the Fourth Battle of Verdun. Pétain, the French generalissimo, General Fayolle, commanding the group of armies of which Guillaumat's formed one, General de Castelnau, the director of another group of armies, and Guillaumat himself were present at the review. The King pinned the Belgian Military Medal on the breast of de Castelnau, victor at the Battles of the Grand Couronné and Lassigny-Roye, and bestowed other decorations on Generals Fayolle, Guillaumat, Franiatte, Philipot, Caron, and others. A German aeroplane, seeking to pierce the cordon of French machines above the King and President and to bomb them and those illustrious soldiers, was brought down by an "Ace" of the Second Army. A few days later the King of Italy arrived. He had been met at Belfort by President Poincaré,

by M. Ribot, and by General Pétain. Round Massevaux he had reviewed Alsatian veterans of the Crimean, Italian, and Mexican Wars. From Massevaux he had visited the ruins of Thann and the Hartmannsweilerkopf, being everywhere received by the liberated Alsatians with the wildest enthusiasm. At Verdun he conferred the Italian War Cross on the regimental flag of the Third Zouaves, a regiment which had fought under Marshal MacMahon at the Battle of Magenta—the first big battle won by the French in 1859 when assisting the King's grandfather to liberate Italy from the Austrians. King Victor, too, decorated various officers and, before leaving to pay a visit to King Albert, he obtained a panoramic view of the battlefield from an advanced observatory. Below is his farewell telegram to President Poincaré :

On leaving the soil of France, I should like to express to you my deep appreciation for the cordial and friendly reception given me during my too short voyage by you, M. le Président, and by the gallant French Army and nation. With deep emotion, I visited the battlefield where the French soldiers have given so many proofs of striking heroism, and the land once more reunited to the sacred soil of France, and have brought away with me an unforgettable impression of the lines of Verdun, where the tenacious French resistance triumphed over the enemy's assault. The soldiers of Italy are fighting on the steep cliffs of our Alps and on the Carso, filled with ambushes. The soldiers of France are fighting against the enemy, the invader of their country. They are both shedding their generous blood for the same noble cause, and it is with their blood that they are sealing the intimate union of our nations, for whom destiny reserves a glorious future and active and harmonious work in the paths of civilization.



Nor was this the last of the tributes rendered to Verdun and the Second Army. On September 30, in the Reception Hall of the Citadel of Verdun, General Sir John Cowans, Quarter-master-General of the British Army, presented the town of Verdun with a British flag, sent by the Army Council in fulfilment of a promise made by Mr. Lloyd George when he was Minister of War. After presenting the British flag to M. Robin, the Deputy-Mayor, and receiving the salute of the troops, General Cowans made a speech, in which he said :—

For long months the eyes of the world were upon Verdun. Entirely at one with France, we followed with anxiety, but not without confidence, the constant vicissitudes of the struggle, the result of which could but exercise a preponderatory influence over the operations of the war. Allow me to tell you how happy the British Army was to be able to contribute by its offensive on the Somme towards lightening the burden of which the Army of Verdun bore so large a proportion. I have come to present to you in the name of His Majesty, our Emperor-King, our national flag, the emblem of liberty. Never in the history of our Empire have the free nations which compose it been more closely bound together. They are keeping their eyes fixed on victory, which is already approaching, and in which the Army of Verdun by its valour will have obtained for itself a glorious and imperishable share.

Verdun, where in A.D. 843 the treaty had been signed which dissolved the Empire of Charlemagne and detached the French from their

Teutonic neighbours, had become a symbol of the determination of the French rather to perish than to become subjects of the despot who compared himself, not with Charlemagne, but with Attila.

Meanwhile, the German struggle for Verdun, which had temporarily subsided, was renewed. On Monday, October 1, after a violent bombardment, the enemy again attacked the eastern face of the Ornes salient between the Chaume Wood and Bezonvaux. Troops with pioneers entered an advanced trench but, after a savage fight, were expelled, leaving behind them 15 prisoners. Von Kühne next turned his attention to the sector between Samogneux and Hill 344. During the night of October 1-2 his guns hammered away at the French trenches. The next morning (October 2) waves of Wurtembergers advanced behind a powerful barrage on a front of 1,300 yards and were promptly met by a still more powerful fire put down by the French guns. Nevertheless, parties of the enemy, after being twice repulsed, gained a footing in the French lines north of Hill 344. They were immediately counter-attacked and, at the end of the day, retained only a small part of the ground secured by them at heavy sacrifices. Some 24 hours later the enemy tried

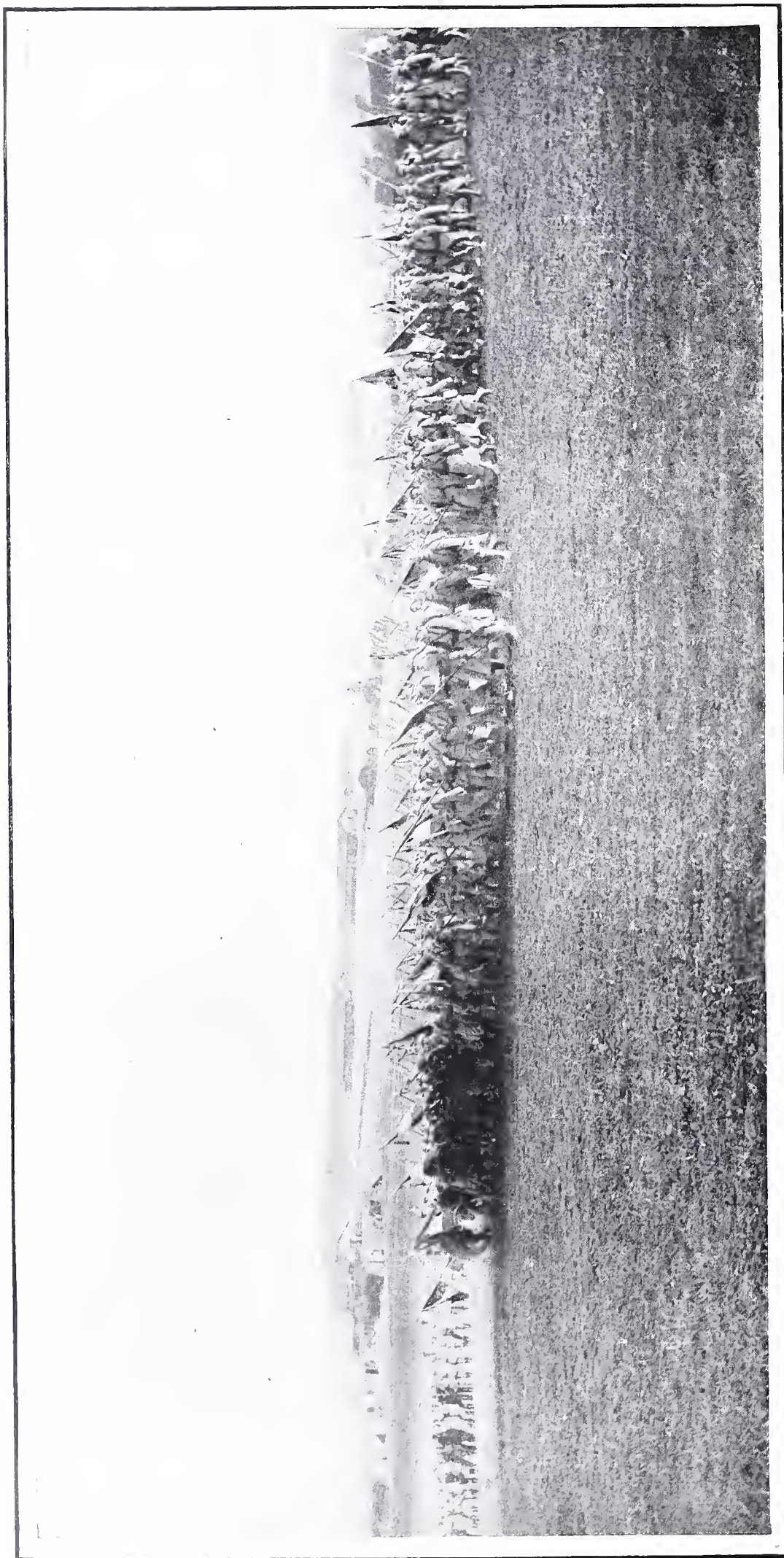


The President. King Albert.

Generals de Castelnau, Pétain, Fayolle.

THE KING OF THE BELGIANS ON THE VERDUN FRONT.





MARCH-PAST OF FRENCH FLAGS BEFORE THE KING OF ITALY AT VERDUN.

to enlarge the area which he had occupied. His guns deluged the northern slopes of Hill 344 with high explosive and shrapnel, and fresh troops were sent forward to seize a trench. They encountered a storm of shells and bullets and fled before it.

Von Kühne still persisted in his effort to retake the hill lost by his predecessor on August 20. In the night of October 5-6 the trenches north-west of Hill 344 were assaulted by large bodies of Germans and the attack gradually developed into a serious action. Here and there the enemy penetrated the French first line, only, however, to be flung back in confusion.

On the 10th, according to the German *communiqué*, the combat for Hill 344 began again. "Some advances into the French lines, south-west of Beaumont," it was said, "met with entire success." Whether or not this vague phrase was justified by the facts, it is certain that von Kühne's chief endeavour on the day in question was to drive the French from their trenches north of Chaume Wood. After an intense bombardment he launched several battalions of Lower Rhenish and Westphalian troops. The attacks succeeded one another till nightfall, and, at some points, a footing was gained in the French advanced first-line elements. The Germans claim to have taken over 100 prisoners and several machine-guns.

A pause now occurred, and it was not till the 16th that the German infantry again advanced. On that day they endeavoured to work a little farther up the northern slope of Hill 344. They did not succeed in this attempt. On the 17th the French, who had up to now remained since the end of the Fourth Battle of Verdun almost entirely on the defensive, executed a raid on a German trench at the eastern foot of the Meuse Heights. The raiders returned safely with several prisoners. A raid near Bezonvaux by the enemy on the 18th was unsuccessful, but, some hours earlier, according to the German *communiqué* of that day, "Baden shock-troops in a bold surprise attack pushed forward into the French trenches near Hill 344, destroyed five great dug-outs, bringing back the garrison as prisoners, with the exception of those who fell in hand-to-hand fighting. In the evening," the *communiqué* continued, "the enemy made two counter-attacks against the trench sections captured. He was repulsed on both occasions." Why the Badeners, if they intended to hold the

trench sections, destroyed dug-outs so valuable to those garrisoning them, was not explained.

Three days later, on Sunday, October 21, von Kühne was once more "nibbling"—to use Joffre's phrase—at the Ornes salient. The Chaume Wood position was again attacked. After desperate fighting the French drove back their assailants and remained masters of the position. On the 22nd, if the Germans are to be credited, East Frisian companies and portions of a battalion of shock-troops, stormed Hill 326, south-west of Beaumont and captured over 100 prisoners.

It was on Tuesday, October 23, that the battle of Malmaison, fought by the French to complete the battle of Craonne-Reims, opened. That battle will be described in the next chapter. The victory of the French at Malmaison appears to have produced the violent reaction of the enemy on the Meuse Heights about to be narrated. Von Kühne may have hoped to counterbalance the defeat of the Chemin-des-Dames ridge by gaining a victory between Samogneux and Bezonvaux.

About the date (October 17) of the commencement of the French artillery preparation for the battle of Malmaison, the German artillery began another violent bombardment north of Chaume Wood. "In this region," said the French *communiqué* of October 17 (referring to the front north of Chaume Wood), "the artillery struggle became very intense towards the close of last night." The next day (October 17) the area had extended from the Chaume Wood to the Hill 344 sector, and on the 19th von Kühne made a feint attack due east of Verdun at the foot of the Meuse Heights in the neighbourhood of Châtillon-sous-les-Côtes, which attack was repulsed. Up to the 20th the French do not appear to have replied very energetically to the German guns, for the *communiqué* issued on the evening of that day by our Allies stated that "the intervention of our artillery put an end to the violent bombardment of our positions north of the Chaume Wood." As has been seen, on the 21st the Germans vigorously assaulted the apex of the Ornes salient. After his repulse on that day the enemy's commander again turned his batteries on the Chaume Wood lines and also, west of the Meuse, on Avocourt Wood.

Simultaneously both of the infantry operations started. While the battle of Malmaison was proceeding on the 23rd, the Germans violently attacked from the north-east of



Hill 344 to the eastern edge of the Chaume Wood. Trench fighting took place throughout the day. North-east of Hill 344 the enemy managed to secure a footing in the French lines, but vigorous counter-attacks ended in his expulsion. Farther east, despite his stubbornness, he achieved nothing. His losses were heavy, and von Kühne, if his object was to counterbalance the French victory at Malmaison by a German success, failed decisively.

Unhappily for the Allies the disastrous turn that events in Italy took from October 24 onwards relieved von Kühne and his colleagues in France and Belgium for the moment from the necessity of restoring the confidence of the Germans and Austro-Hungarians by victories as a set-off to the Battle of Malmaison. The action of the 23rd did not develop into a struggle on a wide front. Other attacks were made by the enemy at the apex of the Ornes salient on the 25th and also on the 26th, when some elements of French trenches were captured. On October 29 the Germans temporarily secured another 500 or, according to them, 1,200 yards of trenches. An immediate counter-attack restored to the French most of the lost ground. There was some local and indecisive fighting round Beaumont on November 1, and, a couple of days later, in the evening, two more unsuccessful attacks were delivered by the enemy at the Chaume Wood, while from the 7th to the 10th of November there were numerous engagements in the latter locality in which the French, after losing some trenches and strong points, recovered them.

The narrative of the long and bitter struggle on the western and eastern banks of the Meuse north of Verdun has now been brought down to the time of the termination of the Third Battle of Ypres. Between August 20 and November 10 von Gallwitz and von Külme had directed the efforts of at least 24 divisions. Von Gallwitz had suffered so severe a defeat at the hands of Guillaumat that he had been superseded. Apart from some insignificant gains on the northern slopes of Hill 344 and at the Chaume Wood, his successor, after a counter-offensive of two months' duration, had achieved nothing of the least importance.

Since September, 1914, the Germans on the Western Front had failed to win any great victory and they had had to submit to a number of bloody reverses. Against their successes in Russia, Serbia and Italy was to be set the disadvantage they suffered by the United States of America declaring war on them. On October 27, 1917, the Headquarters of the United States Expeditionary Force in France issued a *communiqué* :

Some battalions of our first contingent, completing their training with a view to serving as a nucleus for the instruction of future contingents, are now occupying first-line trenches on the French front side by side with battalions of seasoned French troops.

Our troops are supported by batteries of our own artillery, together with hardened French batteries.

The condition of the sector remains normal.

Our men are adapting themselves most admirably to the life of the trenches.

Two days later *The Times* published the news that the American artillery in France had fired its first shot at the enemy.



## CHAPTER CCXLI.

# MALMAISON : OCTOBER 1917.

THE CHEMIN-DES-DAMES RIDGE—A "PETAIN BATTLE"—THE FRENCH PLAN—THE CAVES AND QUARRIES—MALMAISON FORT—THE GERMAN LINES—OCTOBER 22-26, 1917—ANALYSIS OF THE ATTACK—GENERAL MAISTRE'S VICTORY—THE GERMAN WITHDRAWAL—OTHER OPERATIONS ON FRENCH FRONT AUGUST-NOVEMBER, 1917.

WHILE, as described in the last chapter, General Guillaumat was driving General von Gallwitz's army northwards up both banks of the Meuse towards the original positions held by the Germans on the eve of the First Battle of Verdun, General Pétain was preparing to evict the enemy from the western half of the Chemin-des-Dames ridge. His operations culminated in the great victory of Malmaison, won by General Maistre in the last week of October, 1917, a couple of months or so after General Guillaumat terminated his offensive by the capture of Hill 304.

The Battle of Malmaison, which synchronised with the German successes in the Gulf of Riga and the growth of the Bolshevik conspiracy in Russia, began on October 23, a day before the opening of the Austro-German offensive, so disastrous to the Italians, and three days before Sir Douglas Haig and General Anthoine delivered their last considerable attack in the Third Battle of Ypres. It finished off successfully the Battle of Craonne-Reims, which had commenced on April 16, and proved to be the penultimate offensive of the Allies in 1917 against the German fortified zone between the Jura and the North Sea.

The present Chapter will relate the events, including this Battle of Malmaison, which happened in the Aisne region from August 19 to November 10, when the Third Battle of

Ypres ended, and also the other events on the French front during the same period, excluding, of course, the operations of General Anthoine's 1st Army which were fully dealt with in the account of the last-named battle.

Because the enemy in May, 1918, rapidly recovered the Chemin-des-Dames ridge gained by the French in the preceding year and, as in August, 1914, crossed the Aisne, it must not be supposed that General Maistre's victory was won to no purpose. It prevented Hindenburg and Ludendorff from further reinforcing the Austrians, and thus considerably helped the Italian Army; it certainly assisted the complete surprise effected by Sir Julian Byng at the First Battle of Cambrai in November 1917. Nor was that all. The heavy German losses in killed, wounded and prisoners which were inflicted on one of the Crown Prince's Armies diminished appreciably the force at his disposal till reinforcements arrived from Russia.

The ground, too, secured by General Maistre materially increased the difficulties of the Germans in their gigantic offensives of 1918. Had the Crown Prince retained the western end of the Chemin-des-Dames ridge, it is more than probable that his offensive in 1918 would have started not after but simultaneously with the advances on Amiens, Albert, Arras, Béthune, Hazebrouck, and the Mt. des Cats ridge. It was the extension of the northern face of the



salient Vauxaillon-Craonne-Berry-au-Bac beyond the Chemin-des-Dames hog's back up to the left bank of the Ailette, the result of the Battle of Malmaison, that seems to have caused Ludendorff to hold back the Crown Prince's group of armies until the bulk of the Allied reserves had been shifted west and north of Soissons.

Finally, it should be noted that, if on the



[Manuel.

**GENERAL MAISTRE,**  
Commanded the French army at the  
Battle of Malmaison.

first day of his offensive on May 27, 1918, the Crown Prince had still possessed the western end of the hog's back, the Allied troops on its eastern end, and between the ridge and the Aisne, would have been in the utmost danger. That a disaster did not then occur north of the Aisne may be justly attributed to General Maistre's victory in October, 1917.

For the above reasons the Battle of Malmaison, though it did not result in the permanent acquisition by the French of the battlefield, should be attentively considered by the general reader. To the student of the tactics evolved during the Great War it is of peculiar interest, because, like the Fourth Battle of Verdun, it is one of the finest examples of what may be called a Pétain battle. Pétain, a brief biography of whom was given in Vol. XIV. (pp. 65-8), was, like Foch, a Professor of Strategy and Tactics before the war. He was an exact antithesis of the happy-go-lucky

commanders of the Second French Empire. Like Foch too, but unlike Joffre, Nivelle, Marchand, Baratier and so many other distinguished leaders in the struggle, he had not seen anything of uncivilized warfare outside Europe. He had had constantly before him the problem of how Republican France, perhaps without Allies, could be enabled to emerge victoriously from a struggle with the German Empire.

At first sight that problem must have seemed to Pétain, as to Foch, difficult to solve. In numbers, prestige, wealth, the Germans were markedly superior. The Kaiser had behind him a population nearly a third greater than that of France. In the last Franco-German War the French had been hopelessly defeated. Since the Peace of Frankfurt the Germans had outstripped the French as wealth-producers, and nowhere was science more skilfully applied to the production of material wealth than in Germany. To use the words of Lord Kitchener, one who was no alarmist and one who did not err on the side of exaggeration, "never before had any nation been so elaborately organized [as the German] for imposing her will upon the other nations of the world; and her vast resources of military strength were wielded by an autocracy which was peculiarly adapted for the conduct of war."\* But the conditions in France, unlike those in the German Empire, had been specially framed to subordinate policy to "politics," with the usual unfortunate consequences from a military standpoint. While the German frontiers on the west were close to Paris, they were divided from Berlin by a great space, by the Rhine and by mountainous country. If, moreover, as was only too likely, the enemy violated the neutrality of Luxemburg and Belgium, the fortifications defending the approach to Paris from the east would be turned. There would be few natural, still fewer artificial, obstacles in the path of the invader. For the French parliamentarians had refused to grant the money needed to bring up to date the permanent fortifications west and north of Verdun, and, with the exception of Maubeuge, there was not at the outbreak of war a single French fortress between Belgium and Paris capable of resisting the enemy's artillery. Even the forts of Maubeuge itself were far too weak and Maubeuge was unable to make a stand of more than three weeks.

As a typical illustration of the neglect of

\* Speech at the Guildhall, July 9, 1915.

reasonable precautions against an invasion from Belgium we may take Fort de la Malmaison, after which the battle about to be described was named.

On the Chemin-des-Dames ridge this powerful fort, one of those of the huge entrenched camp designed by General de la Rivière north of the Aisne, had been built in 1875 in the northern angle between the Chemin-des-Dames and the Soissons-Laon road. The masonry of its casemates had been tested with high explosives in 1887, and found to be an insufficient protection. Later reinforced concrete had been applied to them, but in 1913 the fort, with its masonry and concrete, had been sold to a Laon contractor, who was to use the materials to build new barracks in Laon.

It was under such disheartening circumstances that Pétain, Foch, Langlois, Colin and so many other gifted thinkers had approached the terrible problem, on the finding of a correct solution of which turned the fate of France and, as was shortly to be seen, the fate of the civilized human race.

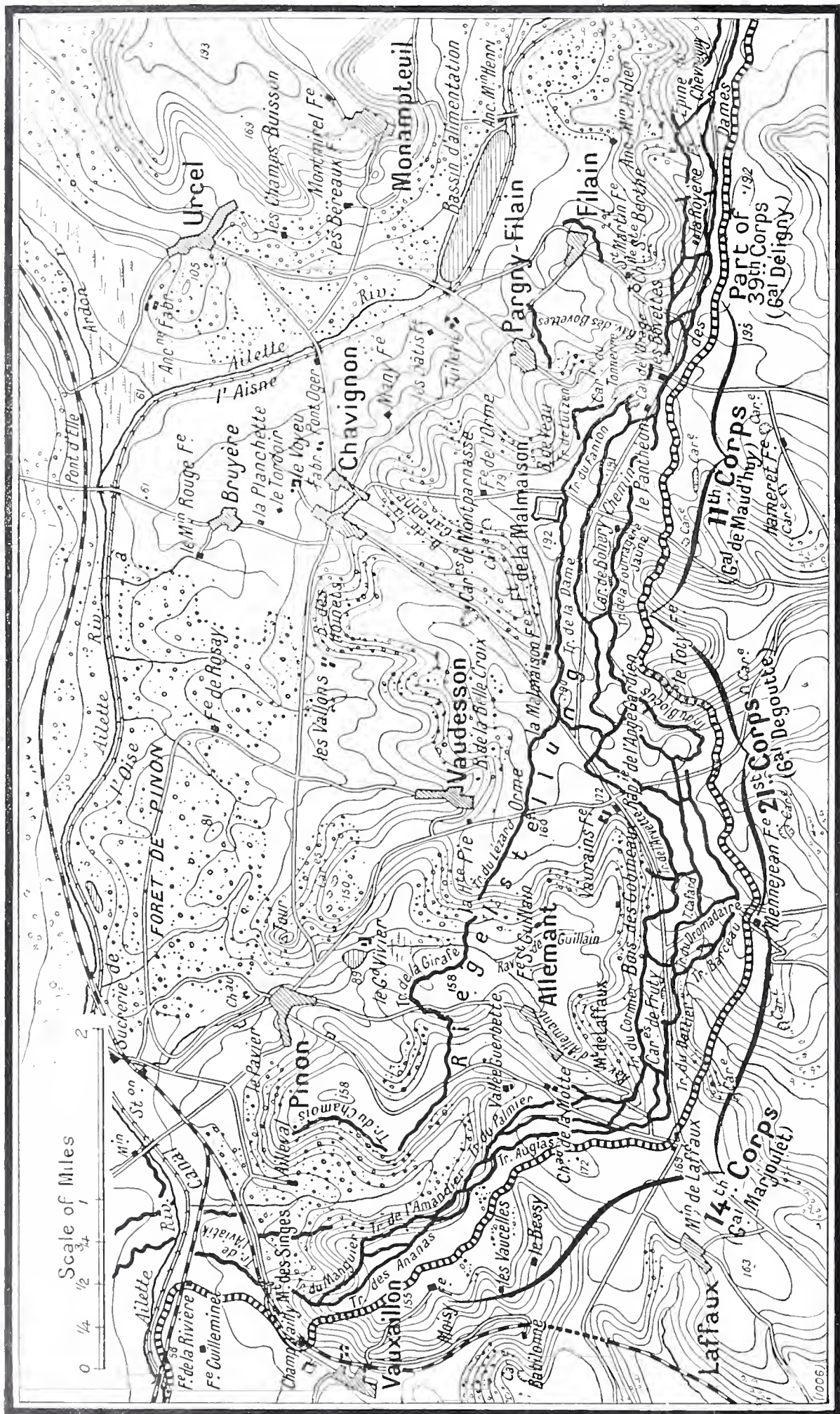
As will have been gathered from Chapters CCIX., CCXXVII., CCXXXII., the fighting for

and on the Chemin-des-Dames ridge from April 16 to August 20, 1917, had been of the most desperate and bloody character. In the comparatively quiet period between May 5, when the first phase of the Battle of Craonne-Reims ended, and August 20 far more German divisions had been worn away than had been the case before Verdun during the same period of the preceding year. The front in both cases was about 19 miles in length. On May 5, 1916, the line in the Verdun region was held by 12, on May 5, 1917, that north of the Aisne by 14 German divisions. But during the 107 days following May 5 the enemy engaged 25 divisions round Verdun in 1916 and no less than 49 divisions on the Chemin-des-Dames ridge in 1917. Of the German divisions engaged on the hog's back none remained there more than 12 days, and only one, the 46th Reserve Division, returned a second time to that sector. From these divisions the French in the period in question captured 8,552 prisoners, as against the 5,863 prisoners secured round Verdun in the 107 days of the year before. Germans and French alike employed enormous numbers of guns, and, as the summit of the ridge was in places less than 200 yards across, the struggle



*French official photograph.*





THE COUNTRY ROUND THE FORT DE LA MALMAISON.



for it by the infantry was mostly conducted in whirlwinds of bursting shells. It speaks volumes for the tenacity of the opposing soldieries that it was not till November 2 that a decision was at last reached and the hog's back in its entirety was secured by the French.

From August 20 to the opening of the Battle of Malmaison on October 23, although there was no great battle, there were numerous fiercely contested actions on the ridge. Guillaumat's victory at Verdun on the 20th at once stimulated the Germans to fresh exertions.

la Malmaison and west of the Panthéon. Two days later, in the night of August 26-7, the German artillery again showed great activity. This was the prelude to a series of attacks. One was delivered on the morning of the 27th west of the Soissons-Laon road between Moisy Farm (south-east of Vauxaillon) and Laffaux. East of the road the French trenches on both sides of Cerny, as well as on both sides of the Hurtebise Monument, were assaulted. Round Laffaux region the Germans recovered some ground.



FRENCH GUNS ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT.

In the night of August 20-21 they attacked west of Hurtebise Monument and at three different points on the Cerny Plateau, but were severely repulsed in every case. The next night they violently bombarded the French front, and on the morning of the 22nd repeatedly launched strong attacks on the California Plateau above Craonne, between the Hurtebise Monument and Ailles, to the south of La Bovelie, to the east of Braye and in the region of Mennejean Farm. Everywhere they were beaten off. Needless to say no record of this failure appeared in the German *communiqués*. Severe cannonading of the French positions, especially in the Braye-Hurtebise sector, went on during the 23rd, and several German raids were unsuccessfully attempted near the celebrated Laffaux Mill, on the road from Soissons to Laon, and in the Cerny and Ailles regions. On Saturday, August 25, a party of the French entered the German lines south of Fort de

It was now the turn of the French to take the offensive. The reader will remember (see Chapter CCXXVII., pp. 199-200) that the highest point on the ridge (about 650 ft.) was the spur called the "Hurtebise Finger," where once stood the monument erected to commemorate Napoleon's last victory in 1814. On June 25 the division of General Gaucher had stormed the Dragon's Cave beneath it and temporarily secured the whole of the surface of the spur. During the severe fighting at the end of July and the beginning of August the Germans had failed to recover the Dragon's Cave, but had succeeded in working their way back along the summit of the spur almost to the ruins of the Monument. It was decided to throw them again over the northern edge of the spur, an operation which involved an advance of some 380 yards on a front of 1,650 yards. The area to be attacked was so plastered with shells that by the evening of Thursday,



*[French official photograph.]*

## THE SITE OF THE MILL OF LAFFAUX.

August 30, the strength of each company of the battalion garrisoning it had been reduced to 40 or 50 men. A fresh battalion relieved it after sunset, and it in turn was mauled by the French artillery throughout the night of the 30th-31st and the morning and afternoon of Friday. At 7 p.m. on that day (August 31) two battalions of French infantry, with a battalion of chasseurs in support, were sent forward. A barrage of high explosive and a barrage of shrapnel preceded them; similar double barrages guarded both flanks from counter-attacks. Over the heads of the infantry flew a squadron of aeroplanes firing with machine-guns at the enemy, and at the gunners of trench-mortars and batteries beyond the crest. In a quarter of an hour the affair was over, except on the extreme right, where a nest of machine-guns held out till the next morning. Thrice the enemy counter-attacked in the night, but was bloodily repulsed. Nearly 200 prisoners were captured, with seven machine-guns, and the new positions were consolidated. In the night of September 1-2 the Germans on two occasions again counter-attacked ineffectually. On August 31 a French party, north-east of Craonne in the plain, wrecked 200 yards of German trench south-east of Corbény. They returned with 12 prisoners. On the same day an enemy raid south-east of Vauxaillon was repulsed, as was one in the Cerny region during the night of September 1-2.

Undeterred by his heavy losses, the enemy

renewed his assaults on the Hurtebise Spur. Four times on September 3 three waves of Germans vainly endeavoured to penetrate the French covering barrage and storm it. Simultaneously attempts were made to advance on the Ailles Plateau to its west, while to its east, on the evening of the next day (September 4) and on the morning of September 5, violent assaults were delivered on the Casemates and on the California Plateaux above Craonne. All were repulsed by gun and machine-gun barrages. From now to September 26 artillery duels, varied by occasional German and French raids, constantly took place between Vauxaillon and Craonne. The guns on either side sought out the opposing batteries and concentrated upon them and their munition depôts. Owing to the long range of the pieces, villages and châteaux far behind the battle-front were frequently struck by shells. Observers in lines of sausage balloons directed the fire of the guns. These balloons formed targets for shells and quarry for aeroplanes. Against aeroplane attack the observers in the cars were protected by other aeroplanes and by anti-aircraft ordnance. On September 26 and the succeeding day the enemy, after violent preliminary bombardments, attacked south of the Arbres de Cerny and also at the neck joining the Casemates to the California Plateau. Neither effort was successful. During the night of October 12-13 Thuringian storming troops violently attacked between the western edge of the "Hurtebise Finger" and the



French positions in the plain east of Craonne. North of the Vaublere Mill they penetrated the first line trenches, but were promptly expelled. German detachments trying to probe between the Hurtebise Spur and the south of La Royère were also driven back.

On October 17 the artillery preparation by the French for the Battle of Malmaison began, and the next day the German *communiqué* ran as follows :

FRONT OF THE GERMAN CROWN PRINCE.—North-east of Soissons the lively fighting activity, which has lasted for days past, developed to an artillery battle, which, since early yesterday, has continued with only short intervals from the Ailette region as far as Braye. The batteries of the neighbouring sectors also took part in the duel.

The same day (October 18) reconnoitring thrusts were made by French detachments at different points between Vauxaillon and Braye-en-Laonnais. They destroyed several strong points, and returned with 100 prisoners taken from four divisions. Thenceforward to the morning of the Battle of Malmaison the guns on both sides thundered almost uninterruptedly. Trench-mortars appear to have been largely used by General Maistre. "The continuous massed fire of *minenwerfer*," said the German report of October 20, "has transformed the foremost fighting zone between Vauxaillon and Braye into a crater field."

It is unnecessary to remind the reader that, owing to the fact that the Chemin-des-Dames ridge was honeycombed with large limestone caves and quarries, the need for an elaborate artillery preparation was perhaps greater here than anywhere else on the Western front. For centuries stone-cutters had been hewing their way into the bowels of the hog's back, and the sides and the summits of the plateaux were studded with workings and artificial or natural tunnels in the rock. These receptacles were often 30 or 40 feet below the surface of the ground, and many, like the Dragon's Cave beneath the Hurtebise Finger, were connected with the surface by hidden galleries. Some of them were, however, already in the hands of the French, which was a distinct advantage to the latter, as the assaulting troops could be kept under cover till the last moment, just as Allenby's men had been in the caves of Arras before the Battle of Arras-Vimy.

Nevertheless, the majority of the underground chambers and tunnels from the Ailette, north of Vauxaillon, to the Chevrégnny Spur on the Chemin-des-Dames ridge, between which points the battle was to be fought, were still occupied by the enemy. The longest, the Montparnasse Quarry, near the Soisson-Laon road on the northern slopes below Fort de la Malmaison, blocked the way to the village of Chavignon



ON THE ROAD TO THE FRONT.





## BRINGING IN THE WOUNDED.

at its feet. This quarry had an area of several acres; it was two-storeyed and could afford shelter to a whole brigade.

Above the Montparnasse Quarry, and to its north-west on the summit of the wide plateau at the western end of the ridge crossed by the Soissons-Laon highway, was the rectangular Fort de la Malmaison, whose history from 1875 to 1913 has been already related. This dismantled work lay east of the road. It was surrounded by a muddy moat—the water from which had been drained off—and its subterranean galleries were strongly garrisoned by the enemy, who since September, 1914, had reconstructed it and furnished the environs and interior with several ferroconcrete machine-gun emplacements. From the ramparts the Germans could watch any French movements between the Ailette and the Aisne, or on the spurs running down to the Aisne from the hog's back. On the other hand, if the French took it, they in their turn would have acquired a splendid observation post. Away on the left to the north-west there was a clear view over the Ailette along the lower edge of the west side of the Forest of Couey, past the village of Brancourt, immediately to the right of which rose two groups of hills

round Anizy on the north bank of the Ailette. In front, Laon, eight miles away, perched on its strange isolated hill, was seen at the end of the valley of the Ardon, which joins the Ailette north of Chavignon. To the right beyond the reservoir, which fed the canalized Ailette, was a group of hills crowned by the village of Monampteuil. East of the reservoir the valley of the Upper Ailette up to the spot where it was crossed by the road from Troyon to Laon was visible.

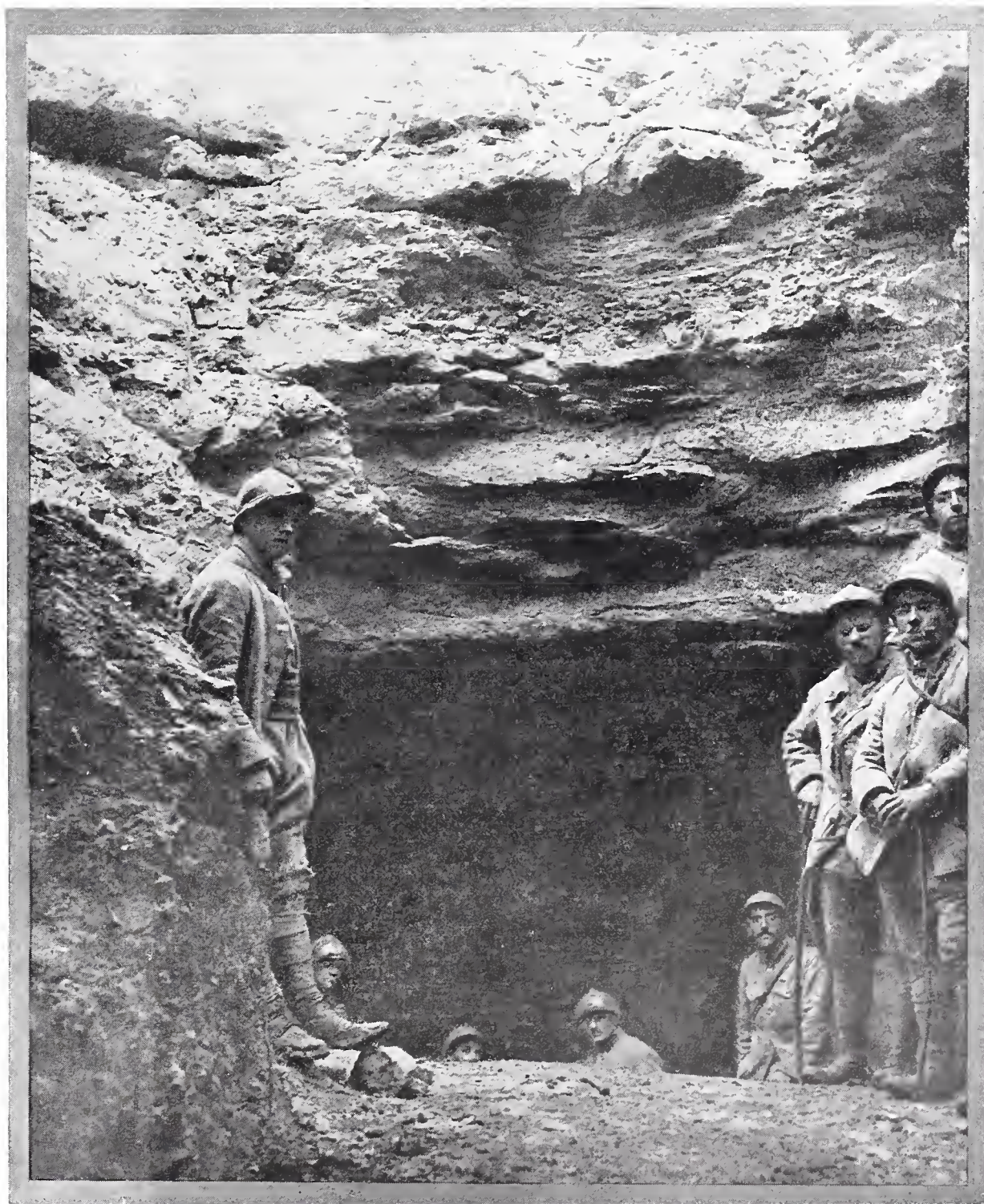
Fort de la Malmaison rose in the centre of the plateau. Before it and nearer the French, where the ground began to slope rapidly towards the Aisne valley, was another huge excavation, the Bohery Quarry. The German engineers at the date of the battle were still engaged in connecting this, the Montparnasse and other subterranean works with the galleries under the Fort. Fortunately, they had not completed their scheme when the French attacked.

The Montparnasse, Fort de la Malmaison, and Bohery excavations, like the Fruty Quarry on the edge of the Soissons-Laon road a mile or so east of the Mill of Laffaux, were specimens of the numerous subterranean obstacles in the way of the troops of General Maistre. The heaviest siege artillery was required to pierce



the solid roofs of these ; and for this purpose, Pétain had provided several batteries of 15-in. and 16-in. guns. These huge weapons fired very heavy shells with armour-piercing points which often enabled them to penetrate through the roofs of the tunnels. Where the thickness of the roof was too great for the first shell to do so, a salvo of shells, falling about the same spot, gradually reduced the layer of rock, until it was thin enough to be penetrated. The accuracy of the French artillerymen was remarkable. An eye-

witness of the bombardment on October 21 reports that one of the 15-in. guns, as recorded by the observation aeroplane attached to the battery, put five shots running into the same hole. The galleries of Fort de la Malmaison were completely wrecked, as were the interiors of some of the caves. The roof of the Montparnasse quarry resembled from above a slice of Gruyère cheese and, in spite of its extraordinary thickness, at least two 16-in. shells broke right through to the double gallery beneath it, causing terrible casualties among the garrison.



[French official photograph.]

ENTRANCE TO THE MONTPARNASSE QUARRY.



Moreover, the holes made into the interior of a grotto at once became funnels down which poured torrents of gas and many bullets from shrapnel shells.

When, disguised as a simple tourist, von Kluck before the war had inspected the caves in the Chemin-des-Dames ridge, he little suspected that they would be entered in this fashion and by such visitors.

The caves and tunnels thus rendered untenable had been utilized by the enemy as secure hiding places for the reserves, who at the moment of the French attack were to come to the surface and reinforce the garrisons of the elaborately organized lines running from the flat Ailette valley over the Soissons-Laon railway, up the western slopes of the Mt. des Singes east of Vauxaillon, and along the summit of the plateau above Laffaux to the mill of that name on the Laon-Soissons road. There the German trenches struck eastwards, below the Fruty Quarry, crossed the road and ascended to the southern edge of the Malmaison plateau at Mennejean Farm. From the latter spot the enemy's front went north-eastwards to a point a thousand yards or so south of La Malmaison Farm, which was due west of the fort and a little to the right of the Soissons-Laon chaussée. Thence bearing slightly to the south-east and

covering the Bohery quarry, the fort, the Panthéon, Les Bovettes and La Royère Farm, it wound along the summit of the Malmaison plateau to the Chevrégnny Spur, below which the Oise-Ailette-Aisne canal was carried.

West of the Chevrégnny Spur, the plateau for which the French were about to contend had somewhat the shape of an oak leaf. All the villages—Allemant excepted—lay on the lower ground between the spurs striking northwards. These spurs were five in number. That on the extreme left or west ending in the Mt. des Singes was not to be attacked. If the others were secured, the enemy would have to relinquish the latter.

Froidmont Farm and the plateau north of the Chevrégnny Spur were still in the hands of the enemy, and farther east, on the hog's back, he retained several posts on the northern edge of the plateau, together with the villages of Courtecon, Cerny and, on the northern slope, Ailles. North-east of Craonne in the plain he had not yet been dislodged from Chevreux.

The character of the German defences in the sector about to be assaulted by General Maistre's army between the Moisy and La Royère Farms is sufficiently indicated by the map on page 220. The ground down to the Forests of Pinon and Rosay, which covered



[French official photograph.]

ENTRANCE TO SUBTERRANEAN WORKS OF THE FORT DE LA MALMAISON.





[French official photograph.]

## THE FORT DE LA MALMAISON.

most of the uneven plain south of the marshy Ailette, comprised numerous ravines and was still in places wooded. The ravines wound round, with their sides facing all points of the compass. They could not, therefore, be swept from end to end by gunfire. Each offered several problems to the French artillery. On the left the Vauxaillon valley ran along most of the western and eastern slopes of the ridge or plateau above Laffaux. The Mt. des Singes Spur was to its east, and the Vauxaillon Valley, now a ravine, went round it and, proceeding northwards, joined, west of Pinon, the ravine which curved round the Allemant plateau. This ravine on the west was called the Allemant, on the south and east the Laffaux-Pinon ravine. The Allemant plateau itself was bisected from south to north by the narrow St. Guillain ravine. Similar ravines existed below the crest of the Chemin-des-Dames ridge. From Vaudesson one descended northwards to the west of Chavignon where it met the western of the two gullies, at the head of which was Malmaison Farm. Fort de la Malmaison was on the plateau above the eastern gully. The plateau was divided from the Filain and Pargny-Filain region, which the French right was attacking, by a valley into which the eastern or Bois de la Garenne gully opened just south of the eastern half of Chavignon. Needless to say the enemy's engineers

had taken every advantage of the irregularities in the ground, which, apart from the caves on the sides of the ravines, was peculiarly adapted for machine-gun tactics.

It will be perceived from the map that the German front line on the crest of the Chemin-des-Dames and Laffaux ridges consisted of two or more trenches, and that behind this zone there started from the western edge of the ridge above Pinon another line of entrenchments—what the Germans called a *Riegelstellung*, i.e., support line—stretching eastwards south of the farm and fort of Malmaison to the Panthéon.\*

To the north of the support line the fortified villages of Pinon and Vaudesson, the Malmaison farm and fort, and, below them, the Montparnasse quarry, Chavignon, and Bruyère, with various intermediate organized woods, caves, and "pill-boxes," formed the German third position. The village fortress of Allemant and numerous strong points were between the first and second positions.

On the German right north of Moisy Farm the entrenchments round the Mt. des Singes to the bank of the Ailette prevented the French turning the heights in that direction. The low ground north of the road Pinon-Chavignon as far as the Ailette was wooded (Forests of

\* Literally "a barring position," intended to stop retreat from the line in front of it, to which we should give the name support line.



Pinon and Rosay), and the trees, which had not been greatly thinned there, would afford some cover to the enemy if he evacuated the ridges and plateaux. The Oise-Ailette-Aisne canal had been drained, and, except so far as its bed might be used as a trench, could not be regarded as a serious obstacle. Behind the German left, east of the Panthéon, were the strongly fortified villages of Pargny-Filain and Filain, the southern sides of which were protected by isolated earthworks. Should, how-



[French official photograph.]

#### THE CHURCH OF VAUDESSON.

ever, they and Chavignon be lost, it was improbable that the Germans would be able to maintain themselves for long anywhere on the southern slopes of the hog's back east of the Chevrégnny Spur. Attacked in front and flank, they would have to put the Ailette between them and the French. But, if the French succeeded in throwing them across the Ailette, the former would not, it must be remembered, be able to pursue the Germans up the valley of the Ardon to Laon. The German guns on the Anizy hills and in the Forest of Coucy and those on the Monampteuil heights enfiladed the mouth of that corridor; at its northern end were the enemy's batteries on or behind the long Laon hill. For General Maistre immediately to advance up the valley would be to court a disaster of the Balaclava type on a great scale. The ground on the borders of the canal was marshy, and a rapid pursuit over it was out of the question.

From the large number of prisoners taken by General Maistre it is unlikely that his opponent, General von Müller, in the days preceding the battle thought he would be

forced to evacuate the enormously strong position between the Ailette and the Chevrégnny Spur. He probably agreed with a writer in the *Vossische Zeitung* of August 20 that the French, if they attacked, had no chance of success. As it happened, he ordered an offensive in the Chevrégnny Spur region to commence at 5.30 a.m. on October 23, that is to say a quarter of an hour after the French advance had in fact begun.

The German Crown Prince had placed at von Müller's disposal, on the face of it, an ample number of troops. He had four divisions deployed between the Moisy and La Royère Farms and three on the northern slopes of the heights. Of the three in reserve, the Prussian 5th Guards Division was concentrated round Filain and Pargny-Filain, and the Prussian 2nd Guards Division on its right supported the 13th and 43rd German Divisions defending the sector between Malmaison and La Royère Farms. During the fighting von Müller was reinforced by the 6th German Division, brought from Galicia to Anizy, and by elements of some four other divisions. Yet, like a prudent commander, he had taken precautions against the possibility of defeat. It was reported by French airmen that fruit trees and farms in the Ailette valley were being destroyed, and that batteries were accumulated on the high ground about Monampteuil with the object of enfilading the French if they succeeded in carrying the western end of the Chemin-des-Dames ridge and descended towards the Ailette.

The army of General Maistre, which was to perform for Pétain the very difficult operation of dislodging von Müller's divisions from the eaverned summits and northern slopes of the four fortified spurs to be reduced, formed one of the group of armies ranged between the British line and the group commanded by General Fayolle, which latter included the army of General Guillaumat in the Verdun region. General Maistre's immediate superior was General Franchet d'Esperey. It will be recollected that the latter, after the super-session of Lanrezac consequent on the defeat of the French at the Battle of Charleroi (August, 1914), had been placed at the head of the 5th Army, which at the Battle of the Marne had been on the right of the British under Lord (then Sir John) French.

D'Esperey had there won a victory over the enemy on the classic ground of Montmirail and

Champaubert. In the subsequent Battle of the Aisne he had had ample occasion to study the Chemin-des-Dames ridge, for his troops had crossed the river side by side with the British and had fought on the southern slopes of the hog's back east of Troyon. He had failed to storm Craonne and the Craonne end of the ridge, but he had preserved the bridge-heads over the Aisne on the north bank during 1914, 1915 and 1916 and, as commander of one of the group of armies which had furnished the forces for Nivelle's offensive in April, 1917, he had had to pay particular attention to the tactical problems connected with the natural barrier between the Aisne and the plain at Laon.

General Maistre was, therefore, aided by an expert in the topography of the region where he was to deliver battle. The share of Franchet d'Esperey in his plans has not yet been disclosed, but we may be sure that he did not minimize the difficulties to be encountered.

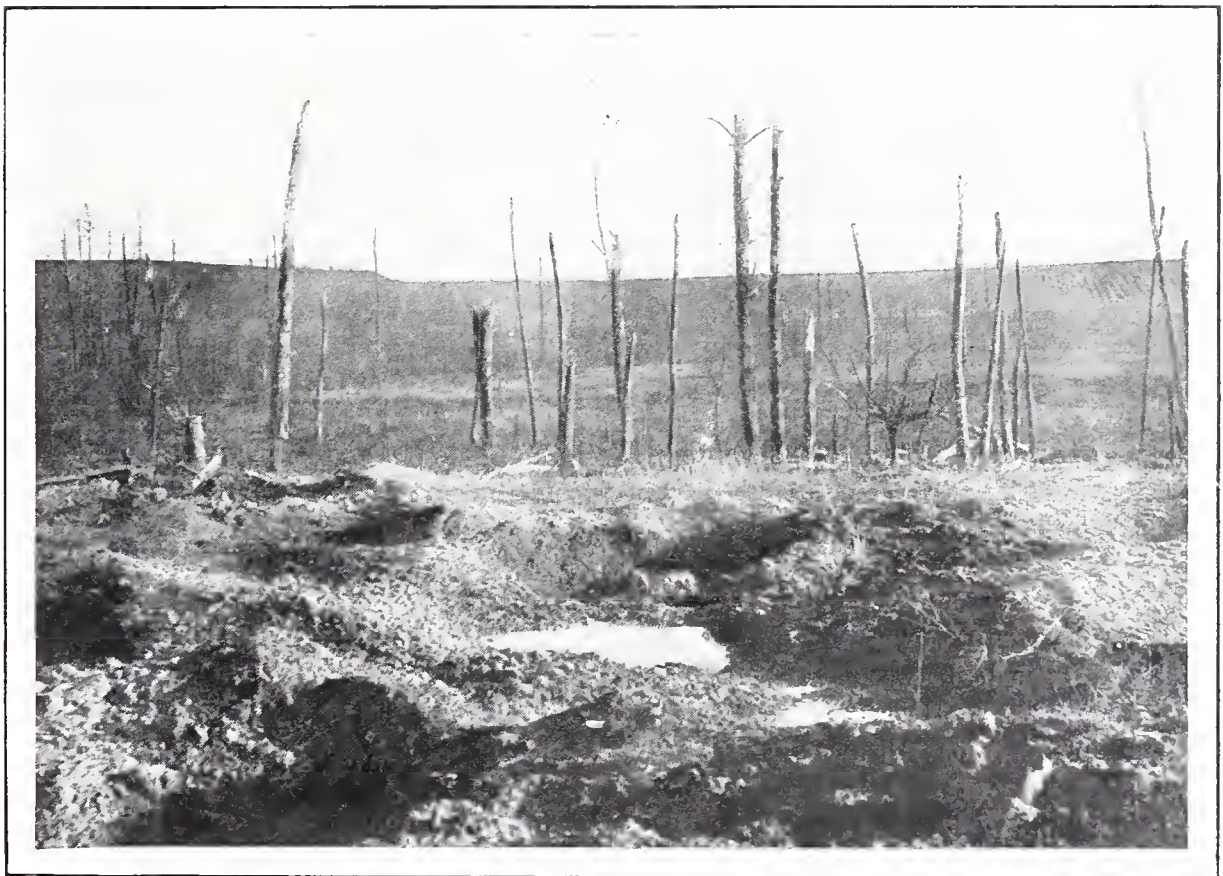
Four corps d'armée—the 14th, 21st, and 11th, with detachments of the 39th Corps, which was providing garrisons for the trenches and strong points on the heights east of La Royère Farm, were under the direction of General Maistre.

The 14th Corps was commanded by General

Marjoulet. To it were attached some of the French tanks, which had been considerably improved in their structure since April 16 when first they had been employed—then not too successfully—in the plain between Craonne and Berry-au-Bac.\* Considering the steepness of the spurs and the cratered surface of the ground, it was an audacious idea to use on October 23, the *artillerie d'assaut* as the French called the new weapon. After the Battle of the Somme, where tanks had prematurely received a baptism of fire, the enemy had organized special anti-tank batteries to deal with them. Notwithstanding these arrangements, they materially contributed to the victory.

The French 14th Corps formed the left wing of General Maistre's Army. It was deployed on both sides of the Soissons-Laon road, from in front of Moisy Farm to in front of the Mennejean Farm. Since May 5, when the French had stormed Laffaux Mill, the Château de la Motte and the Fruty and the Allemant quarries, the Germans by a series of minor operations had thrust them back, and our

\* In some accounts the total number of tanks employed is given as seventy-one; but there is no definite information as to how they were distributed. Most probably each army corps had a proportion told off to it.



BETWEEN ALLEMANT AND PINON.

[French official photograph.]

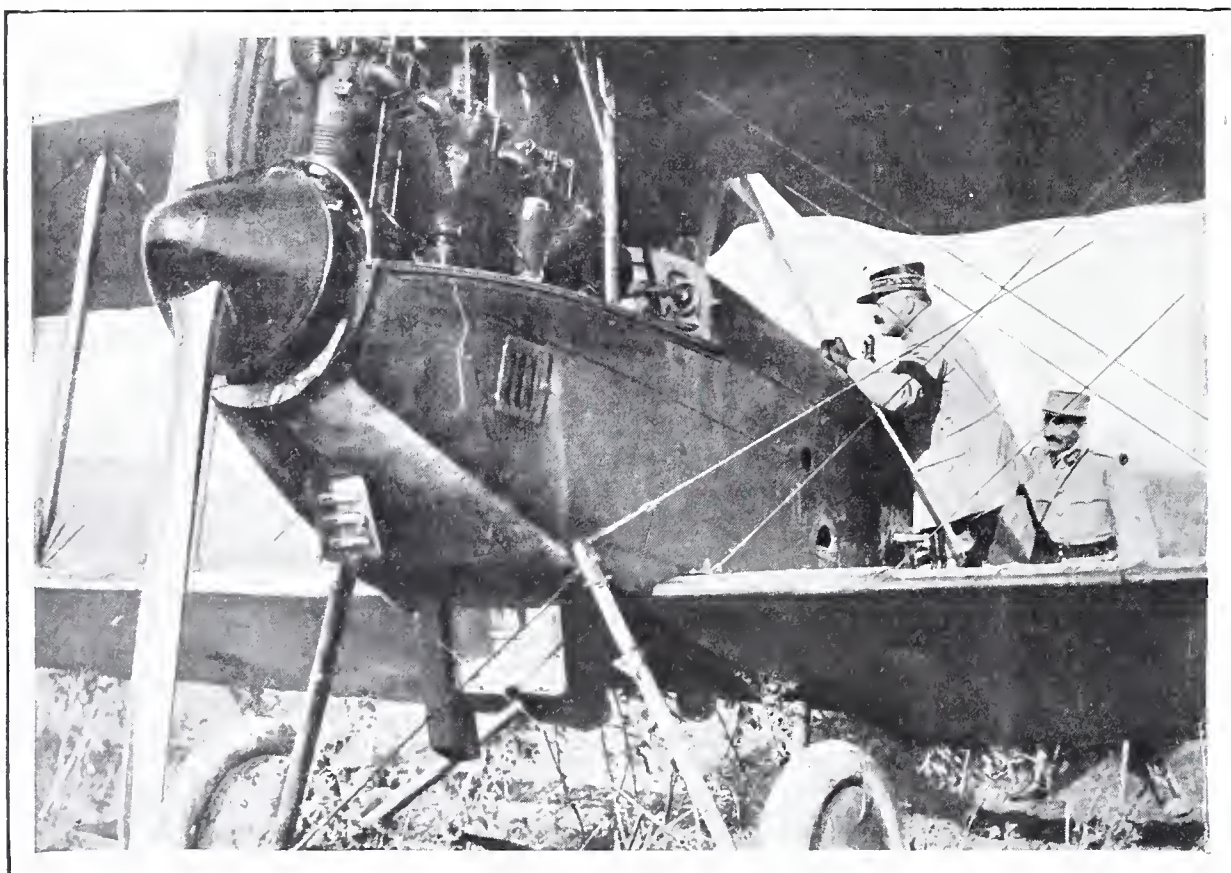


Allies were starting from, practically, the same line as they had held at dawn on the last mentioned day.

On October 23 General Marjoulet was ordered to regain Moisy farm, the mill of Laffaux and Mennejean farm and to carry the first German position, which included the Fruty quarry. This involved the taking of the ridge above Laffaux from Moisy farm to the neck of ground which attaches it to the Malmaison plateau. He was then, keeping on his left the ravines between which lies the spur of the Mont des Singes and seizing the strong point Vallée

Singes spur would be turned on the east, the Malmaison spur on the west.

General Maistre's centre was composed of the 21st Corps led by General Degoutte, whose task was no easy one. While on May 5 the French had penetrated to the outskirts of Allemant, they had utterly failed to carry the complicated zone of defences from the south of Mennejean farm to the south of the Bohery quarry. On October 23 Degoutte's two divisions, the 13th and 43rd, which included several battalions of chasseurs, were, by a singular coincidence, opposed by the German



GENERAL FRANCHET D'ESPEREY EXAMINING A CAPTURED GERMAN AEROPLANE.

Guerbette below the tip of the spur, to surround and storm the Château de la Motte and descend into the ravine of Allemant, capture the quarry and ruin of Allemant and the Allemant plateau, with other strong points between the first and the second position of the enemy.

After the capture of Allemant, Marjoulet's left was to halt between Vallée Guerbette and a point 600 yards or so north of Allemant. Finally pivoting on Allemant, the right of Marjoulet was to assault that portion of the *Riegelstellung* line known as the Giraffe and Lizard trenches. On the extreme right his troops were to stop on the high ground west of Vaudesson. Assuming success, the Mt. des

13th and 43rd Divisions and by a portion of the Prussian 2nd Guard Division. While Marjoulet was mastering the Allemant spur, it was Degoutte's business to drive the enemy from his labyrinthine defences on the south-western end of the Malmaison plateau, and from the Bois des Gobineaux on the sides of the ravine between it and the Allemant spur.

Having secured both sides of the Soissons-Laon road from the Fruty quarry to the point where the Chemin-des-Dames branches off eastward from it, Degoutte was to storm the Malmaison farm and the Lady Trench (Tranchée de la Dûme) between it and Fort de la Malmaison. His left and right were then



to descend on his ultimate objectives, the village of Vaudesson, the Bois de la Belle Croix, the vast Montparnasse quarry, the western half of the village of Chavignon and, to its west, the Bois des Hoinets, which was practically the



FRENCH TANK ON THE CHEMIN-DES-DAMES.

northern continuation of the Bois de la Belle Croix.

It will be observed that, according to this plan, the centre of General Maistre's army was to advance beyond the left wing. The configuration of the ground explains why that could be done without danger. West of Vaudesson and the elm above it, the deep ravine which begins north of the mill of Laffaux and ends east of Pinon would safeguard Degoutte's left wing from counter-attacks. This ravine would be commanded on the west by Marjoulet's troops when they had gained the Giraffe trench.

General Maistre's right wing was formed by the 11th Corps, commanded by General de Maud'huy. This Breton soldier had greatly distinguished himself at the outset of the war, having directed the army which had fought the Battle of Arras and saved that town from the enemy. Subsequently he had served under General Dubail in Alsace. He was consequently an officer well acquainted with fighting in hilly country.

Of his two divisions one (the 38th) under General Guyot de Salins consisted of African troops—Tirailleurs, Moroccans, and Zouaves; the other under General Brissaud-Desmaillet was composed of Alpine Chasseurs.

Guyot de Salins's Division had won renown at Verdun by recapturing Fort Douaumont and

had recently added to its laurels by exhibiting desperate courage in the struggle for the "Hurtebise Finger." It was joined to the 43rd Division of Degoutte's Corps, and its principal objectives were the great Bohery quarry, Fort de la Malmaison, the Orme farm on the plateau north of the fort and east of the Montparnasse quarry, the Bois de la Garenne in the ravine to its west, Many farm (east of the road from Pargny-Filain to Chavignon and due east of the northern end of the Garenne wood), finally, the eastern half of the village of Chavignon. With the 43rd Division, it was to secure the northern end of the Malmaison plateau and the slopes and the ravines descending from it to Chavignon.

On the right of Guyot-de-Salins the Alpine



A GERMAN DUG-OUT.



Chasseurs of General Brissaud-Desmaillet—prolonged in the direction of the Chevrégnys spur by troops of the 39th Corps (General Deligny)—had, perhaps, the most difficult part to play in the battle. Opposed to them was the Prussian 5th Guard Division. Their duty was to expel these picked troops from the celebrated Panthéon farm, now reduced to a very damaged state, also from the quarry of that name and from the Orage quarry to its east.

All these strong points were on the eastern end of the Malmaison plateau. Behind them, also on the plateau, were two lines of trenches, the more northern of which, the Fanion Trench, was the termination on the east of the second German lines of defence. Beyond the Fanion trench, a little below the crest and in the direction of Pargny-Filain was another, the Lutzen trench, shaped like a bent pin.

In addition the Alpine Chasseurs and the troops detached by General Deligny were expected to drive the enemy from part of the neck joining the Malmaison plateau to the Chevrégnys Spur, to expel him from the ruined water-tower of Les Bovettes and, working down the ravine on the east side of the northern end of the Malmaison plateau, and down the Bovettes ravine leading to Pargny-Filain, to storm the trench to its north and the village of that name and, also, the Bois de Veau in the depression between Fort de la Malmaison and Pargny-Filain. In the course of their progress they would have to negotiate the subterranean quarries near Les Bovettes and the Tonnerre quarry to its north, lower down.

Seeing that when they crossed the crest they would come under the fire of the German batteries on the Montampteuil Heights, and that the enemy garrisons were of the finest quality, it is obvious that the enterprise which they were undertaking was difficult in the extreme. Happily, if they failed in the ravines and round Pargny-Filain, such failure would not, necessarily, oblige Guyot de Salins's Division with Degoutte's Corps to its west to retire from Chavignon and Vaudesson, should they reach those villages. Just as Degoutte's left was safeguarded by a steep ravine, so was Guyot de Salins's right.

As has been said, the success of General Maistre depended mainly on the French artillery. Some of the results obtained by his gunners in the six days and nights preceding the battle have already been described. The German

garrisons had before the bombardment been in security; since it commenced they had lived lives of constant danger. Ceaseless explosions above their heads warned them that at any moment shells might enter and explode in their subterranean abodes. The concussion from projectiles exploding at the mouths of the caverns brought down detached fragments of rock from sides and roof and filled them with an atmosphere of dust difficult to see through or to breathe. Uneasily the garrisons from time to time shifted their quarters, but so enormous was the volume of projectiles discharged by the French batteries that it was seldom that they could find any spot unhammered by their enemy's guns. At last most of them seem to have become resigned to their fate.

This feeling of impotence, of acquiescence in the inevitable, thus engendered among the Germans was augmented by two circumstances. Their own artillery on the ridge, which should have helped to subdue or lessen the fire of the French, soon ceased to reply. Thanks to the barraging of the roads leading from the Laon region across the Ailette to the hog's back, it was impossible for the enemy to supply his batteries with fresh munitions. Many when taken had none; others had plenty of cartridges but no shells, the waggons with the charges having got through the barrage, while those with the shells had been destroyed or stopped on the way. Even the 8-in. naval guns—near Pinon and behind the ridge—with which guns the Germans had shelled Soissons, were discovered by their captors to be without ammunition.

The second cause for depression among the men garrisoning the caves was that they and their comrades in the trenches and "pill-boxes" above them were isolated and deluged with gas shells to an extent never hitherto experienced. The roads and paths by which food, cartridges and grenades could be brought up to them, or down which the wounded and shell-shocked could reach the rear, had been rendered impassable by curtains of shrapnel shell, while from October 20 to October 23 the Ailette Valley and the sides and summits of the spurs projecting into it from the ridge lay under a thick and almost unbroken cloud of gas. During that long time it was hardly possible for the gunners to remove their gas-masks in order to drink or eat.

This method of attack naturally lowered



greatly the *moral* of von Müller's troops, and the stoppage of munitions to the German batteries on the slopes and summit of the Chemin-des-Dames ridge produced a peculiar result. Usually—such was the importance of artillery in the present war—there were on an average 19 shell wounds to one bullet wound among infantry exposed to fire in the attack.\* But in the fighting between October 23 and October 26 the proportion was found among the French to be not 19 but 3 to 1. For every Frenchman wounded by a bullet, there were but three wounded by shells.

before and since the war of money, time and labour on this once beautiful but now forbidding spot. Almost everywhere else on the seven miles or so of the German front the same scenes were to be witnessed. Save for the quarries, the caverns and the thick-walled concrete "pill-boxes," which had survived the bombardment, the enemy would seem to have been, as it were, blown back to the Ailette by the guns alone.

But not every concreted machine-gun emplacement had been pulverized. In the winding ravines and folds of ground many had escaped



[French official photograph.]

#### TROUBLE WITH THE MUD.

So far as guns could win a victory, the French artillery had won it by the evening of Monday October 22. Not even the artillery preparation for the Fourth Battle of Verdun had been more catastrophic in its effects. Every tree, for instance, near or on the Malmaison plateau had been smashed to bits. The plateau had become a huge, flat, dreary expanse of monotonous brown mud, blown into craters. A few twisted shreds of broken wire, a snag here and there of concrete, and the broken, ragged ramparts of the fort were all that could be shown for the vast expenditure

\* In the Franco-German War of 1870-1 it was almost exactly the reverse. The guns then had a moral rather than a material effect on the enemy. It was the rifle which killed and wounded; over 90 per cent. of the casualties being due to it. Yet in the intervening period the machine-gun had come into being, which fact renders the above figures still more remarkable.

the notice of French aeroplane and sausage-balloon observers. Nor were the entrances and exits of all the caverns accurately known by General Maistre and his gunners. The splendid French large-scale maps made before the outbreak of the war had, of course, indicated their positions, but the enemy, since the end of August, 1914, had been in possession of this sector of the Chemin-des-Dames ridge and, with the slave-labour under his control, had been able to enlarge the caverns and create new lateral and horizontal openings into them. The limestone was easy to work with modern mechanical appliances, and in three years much had been accomplished. It is not, therefore, astonishing that many of the caverns were still intact. On October 23 these were to be the scene of many bloody hand-to-hand combats.



For the last two days of the bombardment the visibility had been bad. The night of October 22-23 was mistily black wherever it was not ablaze with the flashes from the French guns or rent by the vivid explosions of the shells. A few of the German batteries replied intermittently to the continuous down-pour of projectiles. Those of them which still possessed ammunition, as a rule, reserved it for the coming assault. Had they not done so, their

weather remained dry, though dim and chilly. Then for three hours heavy rain fell, followed by a burst of bright autumnal sunshine.

As the night gradually passed into the faint, luminous haze preceding daybreak, the bombardment increased to an annihilating intensity. Through the air thousands of express trains seemed to be tearing northwards on invisible lines. These were the giant shells, the roaring rush of which was easily distinguished from the



THE CHATEAU OF PINON AND A GERMAN SHORT 150 MM. GUN LEFT BY THE ENEMY.

new emplacements—the guns were shifted from day to day—would have been spotted, drenched with gas or destroyed by high explosive. On the French side the line of guns close to the enemy's positions was also silent. These guns had been secretly brought up in order that when the Germans had been dislodged from the heights there should be no delay in pursuing them with further barrages. Between the advanced batteries the French infantry moved slowly forward up the southern slopes of the spurs bound for the front line trenches. Just before dawn a wind sprang up and began to disperse the mist. As it turned out, this was the beginning not of a clear but a showery day. Up to, however, the early forenoon of Tuesday, October 23, the

throb of the aeroplanes accompanying them higher up. The summits of the spurs, bathed in a sea of fire, appeared to be heaving heavenwards their muddy soil and rocks.

It was still quite dark at 5.15 a.m. when the chatter of the 75 mm. guns announced that the creeping barrage was ascending to the crests, and the answering rockets of the enemy shot up into the upper air and discharged cascades of coloured stars giving the information that the attack was beginning and that help was needed. Until the sun rose, the only light was that of the exploding shells which to some extent illuminated the scene and showed up the progress of the battle.

Through a prompt but thin barrage from the enemy's guns, the French infantry pressed



onward up the slopes and into the ravines to their objectives. The 14th Corps, under General Marjoulet, on the left, and the 21st Corps, under General Degoutte, in the centre, went against the two faces of the obtuse Laffaux salient. General de Maud'huy's 11th Corps and the troops of General Deligny to his right were engaged in a parallel battle with the enemy. Until Degoutte's men reached the Chemin-des-Dames, de Maud'huy could expect no help on his left flank. Marjoulet and Degoutte, on the other hand, were from the outset able to render one another support. The deep and steep Laffaux-Pinon ravine which separates the Mont des Singes from the Allemant plateau, moreover, increased the difficulties of the enemy in the salient. The garrisons of the southern face were fighting with their backs to it; those in the trenches and "pill-boxes" of the western face, unless they should previously succeed in escaping down the Allemant gorge and plateau to Pinon, or in taking refuge on the Mt. des Singes spur, ran a distinct danger of being swept eastwards into the Laffaux-Pinon ravine.

Punctually at 5.15 a.m. Marjoulet set his troops and tanks in motion. His left quickly expelled the Germans from Moisy farm, and from the so long disputed mill of Laffaux, which was at the tip of the salient. The intermediate trenches and "pill-boxes" on the summit of the Laffaux ridge were also taken. A defensive flank was at once organized at Moisy Farm across the plateau, to prevent the enemy on the Mt. des Singes from counter-attacking. Meantime his right, from the mill of Laffaux to Mennejean farm, together with the 21st Corps east of the farm, assaulted the southern face of the salient. Mennejean farm and the first line trenches were stormed and the Fruty quarry surrounded. The French reached the edge of the Laffaux-Pinon ravine, where it joins the Allemant ravine which runs down to the west of Pinon. The left of Marjoulet had arrived almost simultaneously at the western edge of the Allemant ravine. Into both hollows large numbers of the enemy had been hurled with heavy losses. The garrison in the Fruty quarry, attacked by battalions of the 75th Regiment, continued, however, to resist. Meantime, Degoutte's Corps in the centre had crossed the Soissons-Laon road, and, penetrating the second German position, had captured Malmaison farm, which was in the possession of the French by 6 a.m.

Marjoulet's right was, therefore, securely protected, for the Malmaison farm was on a level with Allemant.

Masking the Fruty quarry, Marjoulet at 6.15 a.m. ordered his troops to descend into the ravines, storm the Mt. de Laffaux, encircle Allemant and seize the southern end of the plateau of that name. This programme was carried out, though not without some litches. The Mt. de Laffaux, a few hundred yards south of Allemant and commanding both ravines, was desperately defended by the enemy against details of the 75th Regiment, part of which was still bombing and bayoneting the garrison of the Fruty quarry. Round the Château de la Motte and north of it, round the strong point Vallée Guerbette—just below the eastern end of the Mt. des Singes plateau—there was, also, severe fighting. In and about the ruins of Allemant itself several machine-gun emplacements held up the advance. Before 9 a.m., however, the French 30th Regiment had worked its way on to the plateau north of Allemant. The 75th Regiment, which had by now reduced the Fruty quarry and stormed the Mont de Laffaux, assaulted the village from the South. One by one the strong points in it were carried. Between Allemant and the Laffaux-Pinon ravine was another wooded gully called the Bois de St. Guillain, after the farm of that name to its east. Here the 140th Regiment soon after 9.15 a.m. was stopped by nests of machine-guns, but the French tanks crawled up and put them out of action.

The advance was resumed by the right wing, the left halting on a line from Vallée Guerbette to a spot 500 yards north of Allemant. The right, astride the St. Guillain and Laffaux-Pinon ravine, reduced the St. Guillain farm and assaulted the second German position. The Giraffe and Lizard trenches were overrun by noon. It was then raining heavily. With the exception of Bois 160, south of the Vaudesson elm, where the garrison held out till the morning of October 24, when the wood was cleared by details of the 28th Division, and with the exception, also, of some isolated quarries, every centre of resistance south of the *Riegelstellung* and east of the Allemant ravine had been captured. At the end of the day the right of Marjoulet was facing Pinon and covering Vaudesson, which, as will be related, had been secured by Degoutte. The French 14th Corps, like the 1st Corps at Combles in the Battle of the Somme, had, pivoting on its



[French official photograph.]

## THE FARM OF LA MOTTE AND A CAPTURED "77."

left, been swung to a line perpendicular with the line from which it had started. The Germans on the Mt. des Singes and in Pinon, with the Ailette at their backs, were menaced from the south as well as from the west. General Marjoulet had captured some 3,000 prisoners (including 60 officers), several guns, machine-guns, and trench mortars in the course of his bold and successful manoeuvre.

While Marjoulet's wheel round was proceeding, General Maistre's centre, formed by the 21st Corps under General Degoutte, had been engaged. Degoutte had first to carry the remainder of the southern face of the Laffaux salient, from the east of Mennejean farm to the south of the Bohery quarry. The 13th Division was on the left, the 43rd on the right. They were opposed by German Divisions of the same numbers, supported by troops of the Prussian 2nd Guard Division. If the Germans managed to beat off their attacks, Marjoulet, should he gain the Allemant plateau, would be between two fires, and Maud'huy to their right would, if he secured Fort de la Malmaison, be in a similar plight. It was, accordingly, essential that Degoutte should reach his objectives.

At 5.15 a.m. his divisions mounted the slopes and made for the Soissons-Laon road

between the Fruty quarry and the west of Malmaison farm. Thanks to the superb artillery preparation they met with little opposition. Entanglements and trenches had been obliterated. The Bois des Gobineaux beyond the road on the southern side of the Laffaux-Pinon ravine was cleared of the enemy by the 21st and 20th battalions of Chasseurs; the Vaurains Farm, in the western angle made by the meeting of the Soissons-Laon chaussée with the road to Pinon, was also captured, tanks assisting; and the eastern ends of the Lizard Trench and the Lady Trench were pierced. About 6 a.m., just when de Maud'huy's left was entering the ruins of Fort de la Malmaison, the 31st Chasseurs, after a fierce resistance, stormed Malmaison farm. Three quarters of an hour later General Maistre was informed that Degoutte's troops were firmly established north of the *Riegelstellung*.

At 9.15 a.m. when Marjoulet's right swung westwards astride the St. Guillain and Laffaux-Pinon ravines between Allemant and Vaudesson to capture *en route* the western end of the Lizard trench, the 13th Division began to descend the northern slopes in the direction of Vaudesson and the Bois de la Belle Croix. To its right the 43rd Division on both sides of the Soissons-Laon highway moved down on the



Montparnasse quarry, just to the left of the road on a level with Vaudesson, against the Bois des Hoinets and the western half of the village of Chavignon. The Bois des Hoinets and Chavignon touched or were traversed by the road from Pinon, which from Chavignon ran up along the eastern slopes of the Malmaison spur to Pargny-Filain. The wood and Chavignon were considerably nearer the Ailette than Vaudesson. Before, however, describing Degoutte's progress down the spur, the combats delivered previous to this by de Maud'huy's

left, formed by the division of General Guyot de Salins, must be referred to. This also descended the heights and took part in the capture of Chavignon.

At 5.15 a.m. Guyot de Salins's troops—Tirailleurs, Moroccans and Zouaves—had swarmed up the slopes. The huge Bohery quarry was in the path of the Tirailleurs and Moroccans, Fort de la Malmaison in that of the Zouaves. At the quarry the enemy fought with stubbornness and fury. It was surrounded and the garrison killed, wounded or captured. Before



FRENCH MITRAILLEUSES IN SHELL CRATERS NEAR ALLEMANT. [French official photo]





[French official photograph.]

## ST. GUILLAIN FARM AND HILL 91.

this was accomplished, most of the Tirailleurs and Moroccans had gone forward and assisted Degoutte's right to eject the enemy from the Lady trench. Beyond it they halted on the summit of the plateau in front of the Bois de Garenne, a wooded hanger north of Chavignon and east of the Montparnasse quarry. On their right the 4th Battalion of Zouaves, élite troops led by Colonel Giraud, had been detailed to take Fort de la Malmaison, defended by Prussian Guards.

From about 3 a.m. the Zouaves had been shelled by the German heavy artillery, and many of them had been killed or wounded. At 5.15 a.m. they, too, had advanced, colonel, officers and chaplain at their head. The first two German trenches had been wiped out by the French guns. At the third—the Carbine trench—there was a sharp combat, but the enemy was totally defeated. To guide the Zouaves to the fort the French guns deluged it with incendiary shells. From the Bois de Veau on the right, machine-guns rained bullets on it. All the time the German machine-guns sought to stop the approaching waves of gallant men, but in vain. The ranks of the plucky Zouaves were swept by gusts of bullets, many fell, but still the determined remainder went steadily on, nothing could stop them. At last the ragged and

torn counter-scarp was reached, and the Zouaves leapt down into the muddy ditch. They ascended the ruined scarp and reached the broken rampart. The German garrison was hunted about the ruins and speedily put out of action. Bombers and men with flame projectors set out to explore the galleries. Some 15 machine-guns were taken, and at 6.5 a.m. the flag of the battalion was hoisted on the fort. Other battalions of Zouaves to right and left came into line, and the Guyot de Salins division halted and helped Degoutte's men to organize the summit of the plateau, which was all the time being heavily shelled by the German batteries on the Monampteuil heights to the right.

It was at 9.15 a.m., as stated above, that Degoutte's divisions descended on Vaudesson, the Bois de la Belle Croix, the Montparnasse quarry, the Bois des Hoinets and the western half of Chavignon. The division of Guyot de Salins accompanied them. Its objectives were the Bois de Garenne, the Orme farm between Fort de la Malmaison and the eastern half of Chavignon, the reduction of which portion of the village had been also assigned to it. The road from Pargny-Filain to Chavignon was finally to be crossed and Many farm to its east seized. In other words, Guyot de Salins was



not only to cover Degoutte's right, but also to turn from the south the Prussian Guards in Pargny-Filain.

Thus simultaneously the 13th, 43rd and 38th Divisions marched down the Malmaison heights, with tanks on the left and right, towards the edge of the plain, south of the Ailette. French aeroplanes flew overhead, firing at the heads of visible Germans and dropping bombs on trenches, roads and bridges. Behind the advancing French troops, away to the right on the summit of the Chemin-des-Dames ridge was the battlefield of Craonne, where the Emperor Napoleon had gained the last but one of his victories. A surprise was at this moment sprung on the enemy; the line of French guns placed behind the Chemin-des-Dames ridge, which had kept silence in the initial stage of the battle, suddenly opened and put down a barrage in front of the advancing troops. In the wake of this the 13th Division assaulted Vaudesson and the Bois de la Belle Croix, the 43rd Division made for the Montparnasse quarry, and the Tirailleurs and Moroccans entered the Bois de la Garenne, while the Zouaves swooped down on the Orme farm.

The village of Vaudesson, menaced by Marjoulet's right engaged in the Lizard trench, was stormed by the 21st Regiment, with which were tanks. To its east the Bois de la Belle

Croix was overrun by the 109th Regiment, which took there 18 guns and numerous prisoners. In the Montparnasse quarry, which had galleries two-thirds of a mile long in places, the 1st Battalion of Chasseurs met with considerable opposition. It was not till 10.30 a.m. that the survivors of the large underground garrison surrendered. About the same time the Orme farm and a quarry to its left were carried by Guyot de Salins's division.

Still the French pressed on. The Zouaves, Moroccans, and Tirailleurs swept everything before them, driving the enemy from the Bois de la Garenne and the open ground to its right. By 1 p.m. they had reached the Chavignon brickfields and were engaged in the outskirts of the eastern half of the village. The Zouaves simultaneously crossed the road from Pargny-Filain to Chavignon and proceeded to reduce Many farm. Two hours later, at 3 p.m., Guyot de Salins's troops had fought through the eastern half of Chavignon and were beyond it in Voven-Chavignon. At 2 p.m. the 1st Battalion of Chasseurs, fresh from their successes in the Montparnasse quarry, had secured the western half of Chavignon. On their left the 149th and 150th Infantry Regiments, after capturing a German battalion in the Corbeau cavern, had dislodged the enemy from the Bois des Hoinets. Beyond the Pinon-

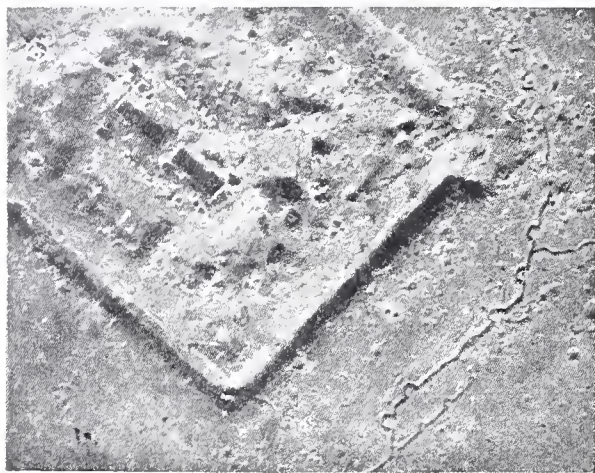


*French official photograph*

RUINS OF VAURAINS FARM.

Chavignon road at its northern border lay the Pinon and Rosay forests, a mass of woodland extending to the south bank of the Oise-Ailette-Aisne canal.

The part played in the battle by de Maud'huy's right wing, composed of the Alpine Chasseurs of General Brissaud-Desmillet's Division and the detachment from General Deligny's Corps, remains to be narrated. The Alpine Chasseurs and their comrades of the



AEROPLANE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE  
FORT DE LA MALMAISON.

39th Corps had to storm the Panthéon farm works at the south-east end of the Malmaison plateau and to clear out the enemy round the Orage quarry, a little to its north, from the stump of the Bovettes water-tower and the subterranean quarry at the head of the Bovettes ravine, which descends to Pargny-Filain. They had next to storm the Tonnerre quarry on the edge of the Malmaison plateau and, mastering the Lützen trench, to drive the Germans from the Bois de Veau, a wood which, to the east of Fort de la Malmaison, covered the slopes of the plateau opposite Pargny-Filain. If all went well, Pargny-Filain, too, was to be occupied. The duties of General Brissaud-Desmillet's division were, in fact, to be very similar to those of General Marjoulet's division on the extreme left of the battle. Brissaud-Desmillet was to swing, however, eastwards, not westwards, and he was to form a defensive flank on the eastern slopes of the plateau against counter-attacks, while Guyot de Salins with Degoutte's Corps on his left descended from the plateau to the plain of the Ailette.

The manœuvre of wheeling round in face of and through a determined enemy is always a difficult one. Here the difficulty was increased by the fact that, owing to the proximity of the French to the German trenches, General

Maistre's heavy artillery had not been able to destroy this part of the German fortified zone with its largest shells. Many of the trenches, entanglements and machine-gun emplacements were on October 23 still intact. Held by troops of the 5th Prussian Guard Regiment, it was certain that they would not be won without a severe struggle. In the Panthéon and Orage quarries during the preceding night the garrisons had been relieved. Those strong points were defended by men—the 5th and 8th companies of the 3rd Grenadier Regiment of the Prussian Guards—whose *moral* had not been seriously shaken by the preliminary bombardment. In addition, Brissaud-Desmillet's and Deligny's battalions, when they passed over the crest and began their descent, were exposed to the fire of the German batteries on the Monampteuil heights discharging their projectiles over the artificial lake which fed the Oise-Ailette-Aisne canal. The ranges were, of course, exactly known by the enemy's gunners, who were familiar with every object within their view.

At 5.15 a.m. the Alpine Chasseurs leapt to their feet, and with bayonets levelled or grenades in hand, rushed forward. Under a canopy of shrapnel, passing through barriers of bursting high-explosive shells and barrages of machine-gun bullets, losing heavily in killed and wounded, they entered the first line German trenches. There in bayonet and grenade duels they struggled for some minutes with the Prussian Guards. On the extreme right near La Royère farm the detachments of Deligny's Corps could, it is true, make little headway. But nothing could withstand the fierce and determined attack of the Chasseurs. From the front they burst into the rear German trenches, storming the Panthéon, Orage and Bovettes quarries, and by 9 a.m. had fought their way between the Fanion trench, the termination on the east of the second German position, and the Lützen trench.

The Bois de Veau was, also, entered by them, but it was found impracticable to advance down the slopes to Pargny-Filain. The Tonnerre and another quarry continued to resist all their efforts and, until these were secured, the operation would be too dangerous. At nightfall the division of Brissaud-Desmillet was busily engaged in organizing a defensive flank from the Bois de Veau to the Bovettes Quarry. Its contribution to the success of the day had been very considerable. Had it been held by the Germans between the Panthéon



and Les Bovettes, the advance of Guyot de Salins on Chavignon would certainly have been delayed, perhaps arrested. Guyot de Salins and Brissaud-Desmaitlet had captured 2,500 prisoners, 15 guns and a number of trench-mortars and machine-guns. De Maud'huy had every reason to be satisfied with his subordinates.

When Pétain issued his *communiqué* in the evening of October 23 he was able to announce that the number of prisoners taken by General Maistre exceeded 7,500 and that "an enormous quantity of material," including 25 heavy and field guns, had been captured. These were

maison plateau with the fort at its centre and its northern slopes to the edge of the plain of the Ailette was at last in his possession. To the salient gained—the front of which facing the Ailette measured over three miles—he could now transfer his artillery, and in the vast Montparnasse and the other quarries he could accumulate munitions and reserves. As the salient protruded from the hog's back at right angles both to it and the valley of the Upper Ailette, the Germans would soon be dislodged from their remaining strongholds on the crest and the northern slopes of the ridge farther east. The key of that ridge was in General Maistre's



THE FARM OF MALMAISON AS IT WAS BEFORE THE WAR.

provisional figures. The losses of the enemy in prisoners and guns were, as will be shown later, much heavier.

The victory of General Maistre was complete. With Marjoulet's right wing in the Giraffe Trench, in the Laffaux-Pinon ravine and on the heights beyond the ravine west of Vaudesson, with the corps of Degoutte in that village and in the wooded ravine of the Belle Croix and Hoinets woods, the Montparnasse quarry and the western half of Chavignon; with Guyot de Salins's division in its eastern half, and at the Many farm beyond the road going up from Chavignon-Pargny-Filain; Brissaud-Desmaitlet's Alpine Chasseurs aligned from the Bois de Veau to the Bouvettes Quarry, the French commander had achieved his main object. He had secured the Allemant plateau and severed the defences there from those on the Mt. des Singes spur and the spur to its seat above Pinon. The whole of the Mal-

hands, as but for certain untoward climatic, political, and military events it might have been in Nivelles before the end of the preceding April.

That capable but, in 1917, unfortunate soldier had rightly held that the Chemin-des-Dames barrier and its outliers to the west could be taken, but it may be that, hoping to pierce the German lines between Craonne and the Aisne with the help of his tanks, he did not fully appreciate the advantages to be gained by securing the western rather than the eastern end of the hog's back. The data, however, for forming a correct judgment on this point are not available, and it should be remembered that, even if Nivelles had succeeded in storming the Allemant and Malmaison plateaux, he would not have been able to continue at once an offensive thence on Laon. For reasons already given, it would have been impossible to move up the valley of the Ardon until the



Germans had been driven from the Anizy and Monampteuil heights.

Pétain, engaged in completing the Battle of Craonne-Reims by capturing all the high ground from the Mt. des Singes to the California plateau above Craonne, was in October, 1917, very differently situated to what Nivelle had been in April. He did not and, in face of the



THROWING GRENADES.

collapse of Russia, could not contemplate breaking right through the German fortified zone. The losses suffered by the French at the Battles of Craonne-Reims and Moronvilliers, apart from those—not inconsiderable—inflicted by the Germans on our Allies at the Third Battle of Ypres and the Fourth Battle of Verdun, had so depleted his resources that, until the American Armies crossed the Atlantic in great force, an offensive on an extended scale would have been hazardous beyond measure. Sir Douglas Haig's troops at the Battles of Arras-Vimy, Bullecourt and Messines and in the Third Battle of Ypres had been used up to a degree which rendered it unlikely that, in the immediate future, Sir Douglas would be able to support Pétain with large effectives.

Thus Pétain was reduced to a policy of limited offensives. In August he had delivered one north of Verdun; now in October, with equal success, he had delivered another north of the Aisne. Both had been necessary, because of the unsatisfactory defensive positions of the French in those regions. Considering the range of modern artillery, the space between the French lines north of Verdun and that city had been on August 19 far too small. While the Germans retained the Mt. des Singes, Laffaux, Allemant, and Malmaison plateaux,

the French north of the Aisne were in a dangerous position, confronted as they were by a very energetic enemy, callous of the lives and sufferings of his own men. Unless, then, Pétain was prepared to fight and win the battle which has been described, it would have been prudent of him to have fallen back behind the Aisne. The latter course, which would have been virtually an admission that the Battle of Craonne-Reims had been a bloody defeat for the French, could not in October be entertained. Pétain had, therefore, to join battle with the German Crown Prince for the western end of the hog's back, and Pétain and General Maistre had done so with such skill that they gained a victory which, to a large extent, counterbalanced the striking successes of the Austro-Germans in Italy on the next and the succeeding days.

General Pershing was present at the Battle of Malmaison as he had been present at the Fourth Battle of Verdun. That he must have been impressed by the science and courage displayed by the French officers and men goes without saying. One obvious possibility is not likely to have escaped his notice, as it seems to have escaped that of some of the Allied statesmen. The Pétain method might be adopted in France and Belgium by Hindenburg and Ludendorff.

A defeat so severe, and involving the consequence that the German Crown Prince would have to evacuate the Mt. des Singes plateau and every point on the summit and slopes of the Chemin-des-Dames ridge, was a bitter pill for the fabricators of German public opinion to swallow. Still uncertain whether its great offensive would succeed in Italy, the German Higher Command on October 24 issued the following bulletin. The battle-front was doubled in length; it was admitted that Allemant, Vaudesson and Chavignon—villages with names with which the average German would not be familiar—had been lost, but a victory was claimed in an imaginary battle west of La Royère farm. We have seen the same procedure adopted before (*e.g.*, in German *communiqués* purporting to describe the fighting at Verdun in August and September), and the imaginary battle formula seems to have had a peculiar fascination for the Teutonic intellect.

FRONT OF THE GERMAN CROWN PRINCE.—The French yesterday began in two sections a large attack at the Chemin-des-Dames, from the Ailette region north of Vauxaillon as far as the plateau north of Paissy (about 15 miles).



The fighting which developed in the morning south of the Oise-Aisne Canal led to a heavy and fluctuating struggle between the Ailette and the heights of Ostel. The enemy, storming in the early morning against our lines, which had been destroyed by six days of the most violent firing, encountered strong resistance, and did not advance in consequence of heavy losses.

Only in a later thrust, from the west on Allemant and from the south on Chavignon, by fresh French forces, after renewed firing preparation and supported by numerous armoured cars, did they succeed in breaking into our positions and pressing forward to these villages. Thereby the positions lying between became untenable. In the withdrawal of the troops from the stubbornly held lines on the front the advanced batteries had to be blown up and left to the enemy.

The French quickly pressed forward, but by the intervention of our reserves the enemy thrust was arrested south of Pinon, near Vaudesson, and at hardly-fought-for Chavignon: further progress was denied to the enemy.

An attack begun simultaneously by several French divisions on the plateau on both sides of La Royère farm (south of Filain) failed, in spite of repeated assaults, with the heaviest losses.

In the evening, after drumfire lasting several hours, the enemy advanced to the attack between Braye and Ailles. Under our defence fire, and, in places, in desperate hand-to-hand fighting, the thrust of the French completely collapsed on this front. In local engagements the fighting was continued until far into the night, but up to the present, it has not again revived. Our troops fought heroically.

On the eastern bank of the Meuse, south-west of Beaumont, trench fighting took place throughout the day.

EVENING.—At the Chemin-des-Dames there was only slight enemy artillery activity. The French have not continued their attack.

On this text General von Ardenne enlarged at some length in the *Berliner Tageblatt* of October 25.

In the present state of the struggle in Flanders, where the final capture of the Belgian coast is a mere will-o'-the-wisp for the British, it is surprising that the French have begun an attack in the Oise-Aisne and Ailette angle which puts in the shade, both in strength and in power of artillery preparation, the partial attacks they have hitherto made as weak relief offensives to help the British. A really big attack is in progress on a 15-mile front. Probably the object is the possession of Laon, which is situated in the centre of the obtuse angle which the British and French attacking fronts form. Perhaps the French have an idea that successful penetration there would split the German front into two parts, which could then be separately rolled up. Even the loss of Laon, which is by no means imminent, would not change in the least the German strategical position. The French attack of October 23-24 astride the main road from Soissons to Laon succeeded at Chavignon, due north of Malmaison Fort, which was shot to nothing. That meant penetration into the German front and necessitated the giving up of limited neighbouring sections and the blowing up of the guns fixed in concrete there. The German 13th Division took up the attack and fought really heroically. East of this, near the hardly contested village of Pargny-Filain, north of the often-mentioned Royère farm, the furious attack was stopped. It will undoubtedly be repeated. Its prospects of final success are, however, small, as its striking force is essentially weakened.

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Here is an observation that should be made. It may perhaps seem superfluous, but it is well to repeat it. The German Command is disposed in certain circumstances to evacuate voluntarily districts which



[French official photograph.]

PRISONERS OF THE 2nd DIVISION OF THE PRUSSIAN GUARDS.



are worthless and not important for great tactical decisions, if by this means our own blood can be spared and heavy losses inflicted on the enemy. This approved theory is to be adhered to. The German newspaper reader should not allow himself to be influenced by enemy reports of victory which will follow automatically every such evacuation.

That Pétain was aiming at Laon was, of course, a supposition which General von Ardenne knew to be absurd.

General von Ardenne's supposition that the Germans might have to retreat still farther had, at the time when his article was published, already come to pass. So crushing had been the blow struck by General Maistre that during the late afternoon of Tuesday, October 23, and the following night von Müller was in no position to counter-attack either from the Mt. des Singes and Pinon plateaux, from the Plain of the Ailette, or from the Chevrégnys spur. Two of his reserve divisions had been used up in the fighting between Allemant and Chavignon. A third was on the defensive round Pargny-Filain and Filain, and the fourth, from Galicia, which had arrived at Anizy while the battle was raging, was unable to debouch and cross the Ailette owing to the French barrage.

Von Müller and his staff even appear to have momentarily lost their nerve. A German battalion commander captured in Pinon on the 25th had two conflicting sets of instructions

on his person. One ordered him to retire, the other to hold on at all costs. Similar confusing orders were found in the pockets of enemy officers taken elsewhere. The cutting down of fruit trees and the burning of homesteads south and north of the Ailette, which had been observed by the French airmen before the battle, ceased to be sporadic. A pall of black smoke from the conflagrations drifted over the plain. It was obvious that a retreat was intended and was proceeding.

On Wednesday, October 24, Pétain and General Maistre reaped the first topographical fruits of the victory. The Mt. des Singes and Pinon plateaux were evacuated by the enemy, hotly pursued by Marjoulet's left wing from the Vauxaillon valley and the Allemant ravine. The departing Germans, thinned by shell and machine-gun fire, fled across the Ailette or into Pinon and the Pinon forest. French patrols sent out from the Vaudesson-Chavignon front brought in large bodies of prisoners, the number of whom now exceeded 8,000. Some 70 guns, 30 trench-mortars, and 80 machine-guns had also been counted, but a great many more were still to be discovered.

The next day, Thursday, October 25, sad and bad news from Italy reached Pétain. The Caporetto sector had been pierced by a German corps, and the Italians were preparing to



GERMAN PRISONERS OF OCTOBER 23.



*French official photograph.*

## SPOILS AT THE FARM OF VAURAINS.

abandon the Bainsizza plateau and the Carso, and to retreat into the Friulian plain. To relieve the situation in Italy it was only too probable that French and British troops would have to be railed through the Mt. Cenis tunnel and by the Riviera line to Lombardy. To prevent Ludendorff from transferring more troops to the Julian Alps and Tirol it was necessary that General Maistre should exploit the victory of Malmaison to the utmost, and that the French and British, supported by the Belgian right wing, should vigorously assault once more Sixt von Armin's defensive zone in Flanders.

While Rucquoy, Anthoine, Gough and Plumer made their final preparations for the offensive which began on the next day and ended with the acquisition of the Merckem Peninsula and Passchendaele, the forces of General Maistre, which in the original plan were not to have entered the plain south of the Ailette, stormed Pinon, where they captured 600 prisoners, and penetrated the forests of Pinon and Rosay, capturing Rosay farm. Simultaneously troops of de Maud'huy's Corps from the Chemin-des-Dames ridge and from the eastern side of the Malmaison plateau surrounded and reduced the farms of St. Martin and Chapelle Ste. Berthe south of Filain—into which village patrols penetrated—cleared out the garrisons of the Tonnerre and Charbon quarries and, descending into the Bovettes ravine and the shallow valley to its left and ascending from Many farm, encircled and fought their way through Pargny-Filain. The

Prussian Guards at all these points put up a stubborn resistance, but were finally obliged to seek shelter beyond the canal, on the Montampteuil Heights. In the course of the day more than 2,000 prisoners were captured by General Maistre and 20 more guns, including several 6-in. howitzers. The total of wounded and unwounded Germans in the French cages had swelled to over 11,000, among them over 200 officers. At Filain elements of one of the crack German Guard regiments, the Königin Elizabeth, surrendered. They had received no food for three days and had been abandoned by their officers.

When the sun set on Thursday, October 25, the line of General Maistre ran from Vauxaillon by the north of Mt. des Singes along the Soissons-Laon railway to the point near Anizy where it crossed the Oise-Ailette-Aisne canal. Thence it turned eastward through the marshy region at the northern edge of the forests of Pinon and Rosay and, still south of the canal, bent back south-eastwards to north of the west end of the lake or canal reservoir. Skirting the western bank of the reservoir, it ran up to the Chemin-des-Dames ridge east of Pargny-Filain and Filain. Between the old and the new front thousands of Territorials and Africans and Asiatic natives, amid the falling shells rained on the ridge and plateaux by the enemy's batteries round Anizy and Montampteuil, were building new roads across the wilderness of craters and repairing with concrete and steel, so far as it was possible, the damage done to the caves.



Von Müller's troops in their retreat blew up the bridges across the Ailette between the north of the Mt. des Singes and the reservoir. On the 25th the German Higher Command published their account of a further reverse. The news from Italy being so good from the Kaiser's standpoint, concealment had become unnecessary; it was given out, however, that the retirement south-east of Chavignon had been effected "according to our (the German) plans," and that the French had vainly tried to continue the pursuit beyond the Ailette.



A GERMAN TRENCH AFTER HEAVY BOMBARDMENT.

FRONT OF GERMAN CROWN PRINCE.—After strong firing preparation, the French advanced yesterday from the northern slopes of the Chemin-des-Dames into the Ailette region. Their attack met, at the southern edge of the Pinon Wood, our advanced troops, brought up in the previous night, which, after a short engagement, were withdrawn to the northern bank of the Oise-Aisne Canal. We were, therefore, not successful in fully saving in the Pinon Wood, which was shot to pieces, the fixed gun material which had been established in the days preceding the fighting.

At the other points of the battlefield after the successful warding off of the enemy thrust, our lines, in accordance with our plans, were withdrawn behind the Canal near and south-east of Chavignon. The enemy sought many times later to cross the Canal lowlands; he was everywhere thrown back by our battle troops.

Friday, October 26, was mostly spent by General Maistre in consolidating his battle-front. North of Chapelle Ste. Berthe the troops of de Maud'huy reduced some strong points still untaken in Filain and reached the bank of the canal reservoir. Deligny's men on the summit of the Chevrégnny spur pushed the enemy over the northern crest. This success speedily led to another. The enemy round Froidmont Farm to the south-east, one of the last posts from which his observers could look towards the Aisne, were overpowered by the French on Saturday, October 27.

By nightfall of that day the exact number of prisoners and guns taken in the offensive since 5.15 a.m. on October 23 was ascertained. In addition to 180 guns, General Maistre had



REPAIRING UNDERGROUND SHELTERS AFTER THEIR CAPTURE.





LAON.

secured 11,157 prisoners, besides 222 trench-mortars and 720 machine-guns. At the Battle of Moronvilliers, delivered by General Anthoine between April 17 and May 20, the number of Germans taken had been 6,120, with 52 guns, 42 trench-mortars, and 103 machine-guns. Between August 20 and 24 General Guillaumat at Verdun had secured 8,100 prisoners, but these, it should be added, were unwounded. Whether General Maistre's victory from the point of view of captures of men was a greater one than General Guillaumat's is uncertain, but the former had without doubt taken far more guns and machine-guns. The reason for this different result lay in the nature of the battlefields. On the east bank of the Meuse, north of Verdun, von Gallwitz had been able to adopt a more elastic system of defence. At Malmaison it was impossible for von Müller to do this to any extent. Fighting on the edge of the steep heights rising south of the Ailette, he could not quickly withdraw his guns when the French infantry crowned the crest; for their transference to the canal would have been under fire all the way, and the crossings of the canal were within reach of the French batteries. Topographical conditions largely explain, too, why General Maistre was so far more successful than the Allied leaders in the Third Battle of Ypres, where on July 31 the British took some 6,100 prisoners and 25 guns; on August 16 they and the French captured over 2,100 prisoners and 30 guns:

on September 20, 3,243 prisoners with a few pieces.

Fortunately the plan outlined in the German Order of June 30, which had baffled Gough and Plumer so much, was not capable of realization at all points. We have seen that von Gallwitz could not adopt it west of the Meuse; von Müller at the Battle of Malmaison had not been able to take full advantage of the idea developed in it. West of the Soissons-Laon road he had done so, but east of the road he had had to rely on the strength of his first line defences. Once these were taken he had had no option but to place the Ailette between him and his pursuers, and quarries, like the Montparnasse quarry, had become mere traps for his defeated infantry.

Whether the German Crown Prince was ashamed to admit his discomfiture or that he wished to obtain time for an orderly evacuation of the remainder of the hog's back, he did not at once instruct his subordinates to abandon the imperilled positions east of La Royère farm. On Sunday, October 28—the day of the fall of Gorizia—at 12.30 p.m., waves of Germans made a determined effort to recover the ground lost north of Froidmont Farm. They were heavily repulsed, losing 60 prisoners. Two days later (Tuesday, October 30) an attack in the Cerny region was also beaten off. But General Maistre's guns were steadily accumulating on the Allemant and Malmaison plateaux, in the Pinon and Rosay forests, and round Pargny-



Filain and Filain. His gunners enfiladed the valley of the Ailette east of the reservoir, and poured high-explosive, gas and shrapnel shells on the enemy defending the northern slopes of the Chemin-des-Dames ridge and the few points still held by him on the summit. From the Aisne valley to the east of Berry-au-Bac the French artillery joined in the work of destruction. Reluctantly the German commanders made preparations for carrying out their retreat in face of a determined and enterprising antagonist.

Those preparations were, as might have been expected, of a skilful order. Nevertheless, but for the disturbance occasioned in the French plans by the appalling news from Italy, where Cadorna had been forced on the 31st to retire behind the Tagliamento, leaving in the hands of the enemy close on 200,000 prisoners and 1,000 guns, the retreat from the ridge to the north bank of the Ailette might have been converted by the French into another disaster for the enemy. As it was, like the British at Gallipoli, the Germans in the night of November 1-2 slipped down the slopes. For fear of alarming the French, a few hundred yards away, they did not blow up or injure their shelters, tunnels, and "pill-boxes," and a screen of

machine-gunners and riflemen were left on the summit of the hog's back firing till almost dawn.

Just before sunrise a party of French Chasseurs, suspecting that the enemy were retreating, boldly pushed into a German trench. It was found to be empty. Immediately the infantry and gunners were informed and the 75 guns opened a creeping barrage, behind which waves of foot soldiers advanced to and over the crest. By mid-day Cerny, at 3 p.m. Courtecon, and at 7 p.m. Ailles—the ruins of the latter village were at once deluged by the German artillery with mustard-gas shells and could not be occupied for some time—were reached and passed. The comparative slowness of the advance was due to the fear that the caves and tunnels were mined, which does not seem to have been the case except in a few places. During the following night and the morning of Friday, November 3, the French line was pushed forward on a front of nearly 13 miles to the south bank of the Ailette. In the plain, north-east of Craonne, the remains of Chevreux were occupied and patrols reached the southern outskirts of Corbeny. Some 20 more heavy and field guns had been captured since October 27. The bridges across the Upper Ailette had, of course, been destroyed by the enemy.



*[French official photograph.]*

FRENCH IN THE CAPTURED GERMAN TRENCHES.





[French official photograph.]

## FRENCH SOLDIERS IN THE GERMAN POSITION KNOWN AS LE BALCON.

The struggle for the Chemin-des-Dames ridge and the heights to its west, begun on April 16, ended victoriously for the French on the same day that General Maude inflicted another defeat on the Turks north of Bagdad, the day after Allenby's victory at Gaza, and four days before the Canadians by capturing Passchendaele finished off the Third Battle of Ypres.

Coming on the top of Guillaumat's victory at Verdun, the Battle of Malmaison and its aftermath gloriously terminated the French offensive in 1917. Though, except in the last-named battles, our Allies had, perhaps, won no successes which quite justified their expenditure of men and munitions, they had driven back the enemy in every engagement on a considerable scale. The positions assaulted, in the marshes of Flanders, on the hog's back north of the Aisne, in the gun-commanded plain between the Chemin-des-Dames ridge and the hills north east of Reims, on the Moronvilliers *massif*, and on the heights traversed by the Meuse, were naturally of great strength, and on them the German engineers had, since September, 1914, worked unremittingly with vast resources of labour and material.

The Allied offensives in 1917 failed, indeed, to accomplish completely the objects of their designers. But the causes for that were beyond the control of Pétain and Haig. They could

not save Russia from internecine warfare nor from the wild schemes of German hirelings. Five days after the Germans evacuated the Chemin-des-Dames ridge, Lenin and Trotzky effected their *coup d'état*; Kerensky fled; and the elements which usurped power promptly decided for an "immediate democratic peace." Russia became, for the time at least, a negligible quantity in the Entente.

The events which happened on the French front between August 20 and November 10, not already related in this or the last chapter, may now be sketched. As there was no important change produced by artillery duels and infantry fighting except on the Chemin-des-Dames ridge and the heights of the Meuse, the combats at other points need not be treated in detail. While there was constant shelling and several outpost affairs between the north of St. Quentin and Vauxaillon and between the south of Verdun and the Swiss frontier, the greater part of the fighting took place in the trenches from Craonne to Avocourt. The most important minor operations occurred on the battlefields of Moronvilliers and the Champagne Pouilleuse.

In Champagne on August 21 the French guns caused an explosion of gas-reservoirs in the St. Hilaire sector. Five days later other





GERMAN LIQUID-FIRE TUBING ON THE CHEMIN-DES-DAMES.

gas-reservoirs north of Navarin Farm, also in Champagne, were destroyed by French gun fire. On the northern edge of the Moronvilliers heights our Allies (August 30) raided the enemy's lines east of the Téton, and repulsed two German advances there. A French surprise attack on September 3 west of the St. Hilaire-St. Souplet road was successful, considerable damage being done and prisoners being brought back. Towards nightfall the same day French troops, on a front of half a mile, astride the Souain-Somme-Py road entered the German lines, destroyed a great number of gas-tanks, blew up some dug-outs, rescued several French prisoners, and returned safely with 40 Germans, 4 machine-guns, and a trench mortar. Renewed infantry fighting was reported at the Moronvilliers ridges on September 5, round the Téton and the Casque. Three days afterwards (September 8) the enemy's trenches, this time east of the St. Hilaire-St. Souplet road, were raided, dug-outs blown up, and 20 prisoners, including three officers, captured. On the 12th, again east of the latter road, and also north-east of Auberive, there were lively engagements, in which our Allies had the upper hand. The French on the 14th raided west of Navarin farm, and on the 15th in the region of Mt. Haut.

So far the initiative in the Craonne-Avocourt sector had been with the French, but on September 22 the Germans in their turn took the offensive between Maisons-de-Champagne

and the Main-de-Massiges. After a violent bombardment some detachments entered the French trenches, but were expelled by bomb and bayonet. The attack was vainly renewed a few hours later. On the 28th the enemy was repulsed west of Navarin farm, north-west of Tahure, and at the Four-de-Paris in the Argonne, as he was on the last day of the month east of Auberive, about the time when, west of Mt. Cornillet, the French were penetrating the German lines.

In October the French raided north of Ville-sur-Tourbe on the 1st, and on the 3rd west of Navarin farm, and in the region of the Casque. On the 7th they repulsed an attack at Navarin farm, and on the 9th destroyed several dug-outs near the Butte-de-Tahure. German storm-troops in the night of the 11th-12th, after a 36 hours' bombardment in the Auberive-Souain region, delivered three attacks. There was some bitter fighting, and they were driven back. On the 17th the enemy raided south-east of Juvincourt and on the northern slopes of Mt. Cornillet. The French, two days later, did the same north of the Casque. The day before the Battle of Malmaison opened, they broke into the German lines south-east of St. Quentin and in the Tahure region, while, on the morning of the battle, the Germans raided west of Bermericourt. The next day (October 24) the French did so north-east of Prunay, at Mt. Haut, north-west of Auberive and near the Butte de Tahure. There was



indecisive fighting on the 26th at Maisons-de-Champagne and in the Mt. Cornillet area, and towards nightfall on October 30 a French party entered a German trench west of Brimont, and took 20 prisoners. A small German fort west of the Butte du Mesnil was stormed by the French on November 3rd.

During the period under review the French *personnel* suffered a serious loss. A day or two before the Battle of Malmaison, General Baratier passed away, dying of an embolism. Baratier, one of the companions of Marchand in his celebrated expedition to Fashoda, had been educated at St. Cyr. In 1891 he had accompanied in Africa the column of Colonel Humbert, which captured Bissaudorigan. He was afterwards attached to Colonel Monteil's column, and then met Marchand. With Mangin (the victor of the Third Battle of Verdun) he had followed Marchand to the Upper Nile. It was he who had improvised a flotilla on the Bahr-el-Ghazal. After the Fashoda episode had been terminated peacefully by the good sense of Kitchener and Marchand, Baratier returned to France and wrote his delightful books: *A travers l'Afrique*, *L'Épopée africaine*, and *Au Congo*.

At the outbreak of the great war, Baratier was commanding a cavalry regiment, the 14th Chasseurs at Dôle. He was among the first



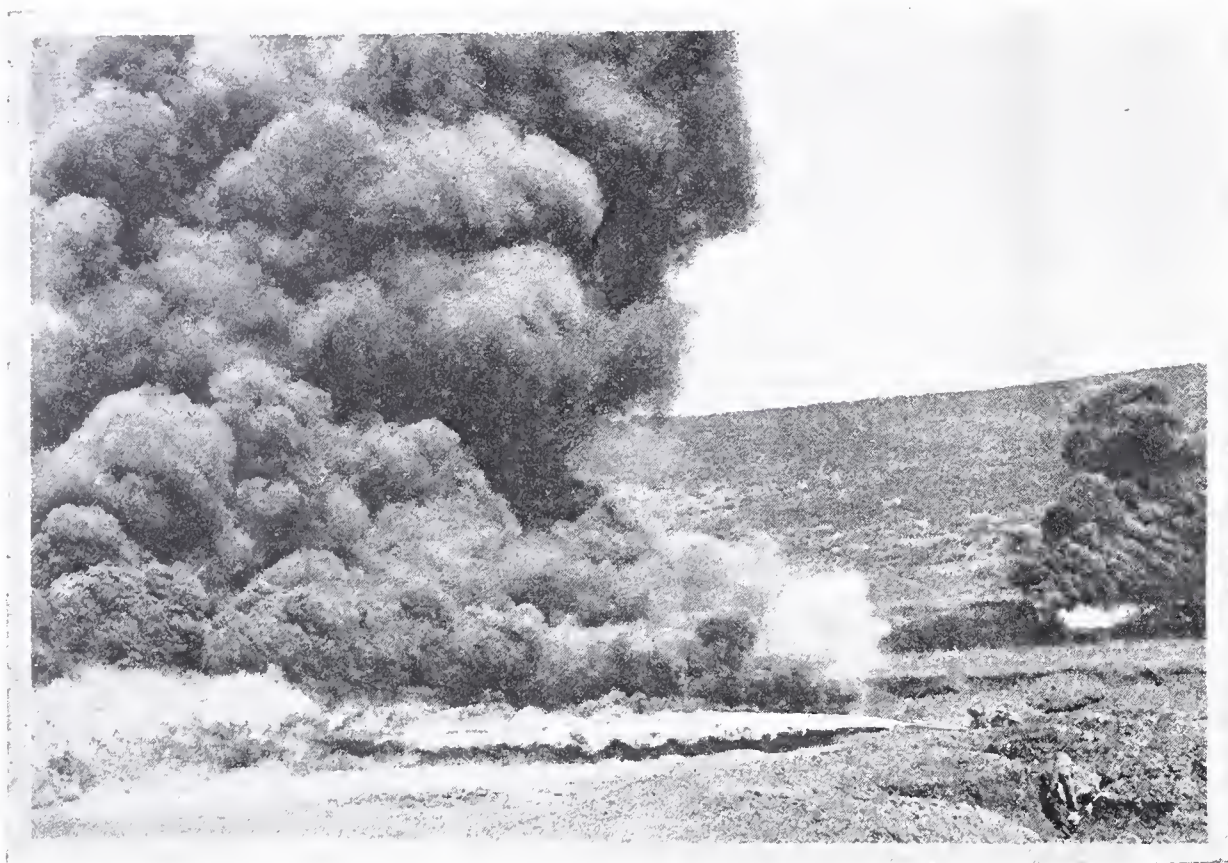
GENERAL BARATIER,  
Who commanded an infantry division.

Frenchmen to ride into Mülhausen. After the Battle of the Marne he was promoted General and entrusted with the command of a



EXPLORING CAPTURED GROUND ON THE CHEMIN-DES-DAMES.





[From a German photograph.]

## FLAME ATTACK.

division of cavalry. His troopers were converted into infantrymen, and when his division, like many others, was suppressed, he was placed at the head of an infantry division. Next he served in Alsace, and in May, 1917, was transferred to Champagne.

Baratier—like Joffre, Marehand, Galliéni, Gouraud, and Mangin—gained valuable experience in these African expeditions. All these officers, like the companions of Napoleon in Egypt and Syria, were destined to render their names illustrious on the battlefields of Europe.





## CHAPTER CCXLII.

# THE WORK OF THE CANADIAN CONTINGENT (II.)

THE GROWTH OF CANADA'S MILITARY EFFORT—RECRUITING SYSTEM—CONSCRIPTION—ORGANIZATION—STRENGTHS, 1914-1918—COMMANDS IN FRANCE—CASUALTIES—CANADA'S GREAT BATTLES DESCRIBED—ST. ELOI—BATTLE OF THE CRATERS—SANCTUARY WOOD—BATTLE OF THE SOMME—VIMY RIDGE—THE BERMUDA CONTINGENT—LENS—PASSCHENDAELE—VICTORIA CROSSES—THE SPIRIT OF CANADA.

THE Dominion of Canada resolved at the beginning of the war to raise and dispatch a contingent of 20,000 men for fighting overseas. This contingent, increased immediately to 33,000, was recruited and sent to England in a few weeks, thanks to the initiative and driving power of the Minister for Militia, Sir Sam Hughes. An account of its earlier work is given in a previous chapter (Vol. V., Chapter LXXXVII).

As the magnitude of the war became more fully understood, the Canadian military effort increased. The first contingent was quickly supplemented by a second; early in the following year there were three Canadian divisions in the field, and by July, 1916, the Canadians were maintaining a corps of four divisions, supplemented by a Cavalry Brigade, and considerable forces of forestry and railway men. A fifth division was formed and equipped, but was broken up, without being dispatched to the field, early in 1918.

The original contingent was drawn from the small regular establishment, the Dominion Militia, a volunteer force, and a number of specially raised battalions. These battalions were in most cases recruited in a city or district by some man of outstanding local influence, such as the mayor, a member of Par-

liament, or a prominent business leader. The leader and his friends would form a small committee, subscribe among themselves the necessary funds, and would gather the recruits after a short campaign. There was little difficulty in the early days of the war in obtaining recruits. Some battalions consisted almost wholly of the members of particular universities. Some consisted of men of a particular class or association, such as sportsmen, men from one trade, or the like. Thus a popular leader in the West appealed for, and obtained, a battalion of none but open-air men—lumber jacks, miners, trappers and fishers. The man responsible for raising a battalion became as a rule the colonel, and his leading assistants in recruiting would be given rank as officers.

This battalion system of recruiting succeeded in producing a large number of volunteers in a very short time, but it was soon found to possess very grave inherent faults. The first and most obvious fault was that men placed in important military command often knew little or nothing of military work. The extraordinary position arose of colonels in command who barely knew how to "form fours." There was a strong temptation to accept all kinds of recruits in order to make a brave show, to look for quantity rather than quality,



and to lower the medical standard. This made it necessary to reject a considerable number of men after they reached England, and after there had been much expenditure of time, work, and money on them. The main weakness of the system was that it made no adequate provision for reinforcements. The Canadian military authorities in England were forced to break up a number of the new battalions immediately they arrived overseas, and so keep the senior officers idle while the men were sent as drafts to older formations in France. This plan, necessary as it was, caused great

divisions were supported by special reserve troops in France, and by reserve battalions in camp in England. By this means the battalions at the front could be kept at full strength or over strength, however fierce the fighting.

For nearly three years voluntary appeals produced all the men required. The response was, however, unequal. Some provinces gave much more than their proportionate share, some much less. The yield of recruits from the French Canadians was disappointingly small. Up to the end of March, 1918, only some 16,000 French



[Canadian War Records.]

#### CANADIANS IN TRAINING: A PLATOON ATTACK.

heart burning. A city in Ontario, for example, which had by a great effort raised a fine battalion, an object of much local pride, would find that shortly after leaving home the battalion became nothing but a name, that its men were scattered among other troops drawn from all parts of Canada, and that its officers were eating their hearts out waiting at Shorncliffe or London for a chance to reach the front.

Eventually the system of raising independent battalions was abolished, and a territorial system, with a number of divisions for each province, was substituted. These

Canadian troops went overseas, as against nearly 350,000 others. For this there were many reasons, partly political, partly religious, and partly social. Some of the French Canadian Catholic clergy were unsympathetic towards France, regarding her as the apostate daughter of the Church, and they refused to use their influence to induce their people to come forward. Some French Canadian Liberals, the leaders of a sectional and racial movement, actively opposed recruiting. Even the appeals of great French Canadians, such as Sir Wilfrid Laurier, failed to move them.

A movement in favour of conscription arose.





[Canadian War Records.]

## CAVALRY IN TRAINING IN FRANCE.

Sir Robert Borden returned from the Imperial War Cabinet in the spring of 1917 convinced that it was necessary, and declared for it at once. A large section of the Liberal Party, led by Mr. Rowell, supported him. A Union Government was formed under Sir Robert Borden, and, in a General Election at the close of 1917—fought on the conscription issue—received an overwhelming majority. Sir Wilfrid Laurier placed himself in opposition, but the mass of the Liberal Party, particularly in the West, the stronghold of Canadian Liberalism, supported the Government. "We have put party politics on one side until the war is over," said the old party leaders. Despite some opposition in Quebec, conscription was promptly enforced. The first calls were made on all unmarried men and widowers without children between the ages of 20 and 23. The physical excellence of the first drafts surprised the authorities. It was estimated that the Dominion would be able to supply reinforce-

ments of 12,000 men a month to the fighting forces. The new recruits were despatched as quickly as possible to England, where large training camps were formed. Here a system of quick training was evolved, by which men were trained within nine weeks.\*

The organization of the Canadian Army was at first largely in the hands of Major-General Sir Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia. Sir Sam Hughes, a man of great energy and strength of character, had done much before the outbreak of war to improve the force under him, and had stimulated and quickened endeavour to an extraordinary degree when war broke out.

His qualities, however, had correlative drawbacks which did not tend to efface themselves when the Canadian Army reached Europe and close cooperation with the Imperial authorities became more and more necessary.

\* Concerning the political situation in Canada just before the adoption of conscription, see Vol. XII., pp. 266-8.



VOLUNTEERS ENLISTING AT TORONTO IN SEPTEMBER, 1917, BEFORE THE MILITARY SERVICE ACT CAME INTO FORCE.





*[Canadian War Records.]*

SIR EDWARD KEMP WITH CANADIAN GENERALS AT THE FRONT.

Sir Sam Hughes's championship of the Ross rifle, in the face of war experience and against British military opinion, was only one incident in the state of friction and controversy which became chronic. His imperious spirit finally brought him into serious conflict with his Cabinet colleagues and he had to resign.

The Office of Minister for Militia was now split into two sections, there being, in addition to the Minister for Militia, the War Minister of Canada in the Cabinet, a second War Minister, the Minister for Militia Overseas, who made his headquarters in London. At first, in answer to the very urgent appeals of the Government, Sir George Perley, the High Commissioner for Canada in London, acted also as Minister for Militia Overseas. He instituted many valuable reforms, particularly in the administration of affairs in England, but it was physically impossible for one man permanently to hold two such exacting offices. Sir Edward Kemp, a successful and popular business man, was appointed Minister for Militia in Canada itself. At the end of a year Sir Edward came to England as Minister Overseas, and as one of the results of the formation of the Union Government a distinguished Liberal soldier, General Mewburn, succeeded Sir Edward Kemp at Ottawa. Sir Edward Kemp quickly proved himself in London a firm, far-sighted administrator.

Up to March 31, 1918, Canada dispatched overseas 364,273 men of all ranks, including rather more than 16,000 officers. There were in addition a number of recruits and training staffs in Canada.

These men were raised from the different provinces as follows :—

Ontario ... ..	156,729
Manitoba and Saskatchewan ...	70,347
Quebec ... ..	40,739
Maritime Provinces ... ..	36,476
British Columbia ... ..	29,235
Alberta ... ..	30,747
Total ... ..	364,273

Racially (in round figures) the Army represented :—

Born in Canada of British descent ...	147,000
.. Canada of French descent ...	16,000
.. England ... ..	121,000
.. Scotland ... ..	37,000
.. Ireland... ..	12,000
.. Wales ... ..	3,000
.. other British possessions ...	3,000
.. United States ... ..	12,000
.. other countries ... ..	10,000

England was made the base and training ground for the Canadian Army. Vast departments were created in London, employing several thousand men, mainly in clerical tasks. At the close of 1916, when Sir George Perley became Minister Overseas, the work in England was re-organized and placed under the command



of Lieut.-General Sir Richard Turner, V.C., who had before that been head of the Second Division in France. There were Canadian depots and training grounds at Bramshot, Witley, Seaford and other places.

The work in France was divided into three main sections, the Army Corps, the Cavalry Brigade, and the additional services, such as the Railway Corps and the Forestry Corps. The Corps was originally under the command of General Alderson. In the spring of 1916 he was succeeded by Lieut.-General Sir Julian Byng, an Imperial officer who had served with great distinction with the Cavalry Brigade in the earlier days of the war. General Byng was promoted in 1917, after the victory of Vimy, to an Army command. The Canadian authorities had long desired that their Corps should be under a Canadian, and so General Byng was followed by Lieut.-General Sir Arthur Currie, of Victoria, B.C.

General Currie was up to the outbreak of the war a real estate dealer on Vancouver Island. Born in Ontario, he had gone West as a young man, where he began life as a school-teacher and insurance agent. He had for many years before the war shown great interest in the Militia. Enlisting as a gunner he had risen to the command of his regiment. The troops under him had even then been noted for their very high standard. When the first Canadian Contingent was raised, he was appointed to the command of the 2nd Brigade. His handling of this brigade at the second battle of Ypres won very high praise. When the one Canadian division grew to two, General Currie was given the first division. Here his remarkable military genius again revealed itself on various occasions. Before being appointed to the command of the corps he had the confidence and affection of the whole Canadian force. His driving power, his personal magnetism, and great organizing ability soon made themselves felt.

Three of the four divisions were commanded by professional soldiers, the first by Major-General A. C. Macdonell, who had served since 1888 in the Canadian permanent forces, the second by Major-General Sir Harry Burstall, of the Canadian Artillery, whose time of service was only one year less, the third by Major-General L. J. Lipsett, an Imperial officer who had been seconded to the Canadian forces for staff training before the war, and who had come out with the first contingent

in command of the Winnipeg Rifles. The fourth division was under Major-General Sir David Watson, before the war a newspaper proprietor and editor in Quebec. The majority of the brigade commands were held by officers who had been civilians before the war. There were some professional soldiers, like General Ketchen, of the Royal Strathcona Horse, and



[Canadian War Records.  
SIR GEORGE PERLEY ON A VISIT TO  
VIMY RIDGE.

General McBrien. Others were drawn from different classes. General Odium had been a newspaper proprietor, General Griesbach a farmer and politician, General Embury a lawyer, General Loomis a contractor, and General Rennie a seed merchant. Sir Richard Turner, the senior Canadian officer, who in the spring of 1918 was appointed chief of the Canadian General Staff, was in private life a wholesale merchant. One remarkable example of adapting civilian experience to military life was found in Colonel C. H. Mitchell.



Colonel Mitchell was a leader in the development of hydro-electric power in Canada. On the outbreak of war he joined the First Contingent and took charge of the intelligence work. Here he applied the same methods of exact observation and minute deduction he had developed in his engineering practice. When the Canadian Contingent developed into a corps, Colonel Mitchell became head of Corps Intelligence. Later on he was transferred from the Corps to supervise still higher branches of intelligence work. The Canadian Intelligence system which he developed was largely copied by other armies.



[Canadian War Records.]

**MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HARRY BURSTALL,**  
K.C.B.,

Commanded the Second Canadian Division.

At the outbreak of the war commissions were given in the new battalions by nomination. After a time, officers were selected from the ranks. Many of the rank and file of the Canadian Army were professional men, and a considerable proportion were drawn from the universities. Several soldiers who started the



[Swaine.]

**MAJOR-GENERAL A. C. MACDONELL,**  
C.B., C.M.G.

Commanded the First Canadian Division.

war as privates were, before the fourth year was half over, commanders of their battalions. The cadet schools of the Canadians at Bexhill and in France proved themselves cradles for leaders of men.

The nominal strength of the four Canadian divisions, apart from all other troops, was about 75,000. The actual fighting strength cannot be given. There were 52 battalions of infantry, or nominally some 55,000 men; over 10,000 artillery, from 3,000 to 4,000 engineers, and about 2,000 Army Service. The artillery consisted of 1 horse artillery brigade, 12 field artillery brigades, 9 siege batteries, 12 trench-mortar batteries, 2 heavy artillery batteries, 1 anti-aircraft battery, and 5 divisional ammunition columns. There were 24 companies of engineers, and 20 machine-gun groups, in addition to the Signalling Service, the Army Service, and the Medical Service.

The people of Canada entered on the war in a spirit of high responsibility. They were prepared to pay the price of freedom. This price was exacted to the full. The casualties at the second battle of Ypres—about 6,000 men, or 40 per cent. of the combatant strength—filled the land with mourning, and intensified the determination of the people. This total was soon left far behind. By the end of April, 1918, the Canadian dead had totalled 40,240. The entire casualties in one year, 1917, including prisoners and missing, were 73,153.





[Canadian War Records.]

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR ARTHUR CURRIE, K.C.B., COMMANDER OF THE  
CANADIAN CORPS IN FRANCE.

The Canadian share in the actions on the Western Front during 1915 has been described in Chapter LXXXVII., already referred to. The winter of 1915-16 was passed comparatively quietly. The Canadians occupied a section of the front facing Messines, stretching from the north of Ploegsteert to the south of St. Eloi. They were already becoming marked in the Allied forces for certain distinctive characteristics; the first of these was the unusual excellence of their Intelligence Service; the second, the originality and enterprise of their men. During the winter there were numerous

raids, mainly carried out on a plan originated by General Odium, which was adopted and standardized along the Allied front. They were of importance in maintaining the spirit of the troops, and in causing a certain amount of loss and trouble to the enemy. They could not be said, however, to affect seriously the operations of the war. Their chief value was their moral effect upon our own men.

Early in March, 1916, orders were issued that the Canadian Corps and the 5th Corps, both in the Second Army, should change their positions. The 5th Corps had held the im



portant and fiercely-contested sector from the Ypres-Roulers railway north of Hooze to St. Eloi, including Sanctuary Wood, Mount Sorrel, Hill 60, the Bluff and St. Eloi, some six miles in all, at points a little more than a stone's throw from the German lines. It was necessary owing to the dangerous and vital nature of this part of the front to make the exchange of

hundred yards in front of the old British line.

On the following day, April 3, the Canadians took over the position from the British, and the 6th Canadian Brigade, under Brigadier-General Ketchen, occupied the crater front. The position was one of great difficulty. The very narrow frontage on which the advance had been made—six hundred yards—enabled the Germans to concentrate a great mass of artillery against the whole position. They had the different points exactly registered, and they maintained an appalling fire. The weather was very wet, cold and stormy. The rain and the shell fire together wiped out the lines. Gun positions, fire trenches, communicating trenches had vanished. Men had to stumble along in deep mud amidst a rain of shells, and counted themselves fortunate if they were not swallowed up in



[Swaine.

**MAJOR-GENERAL L. J. LIPSETT, C.M.G.,**  
Commanded the Third Canadian Division.

positions with great care, brigade gradually replacing brigade, so that no gap was even temporarily left in the line.

The 5th Corps had made elaborate preparations for an attack on St. Eloi, for the purpose of straightening out the line and cutting away a small German salient which encroached on the semi-circle of our position. A number of mines had been dug, and the British troops were allowed to launch their offensive before their transfer. On the night of March 27 six very large mines were fired, mines so heavily charged that the sound of the explosion was heard in towns several miles behind our front. Large numbers of the enemy were killed, and half a minute after the explosion the Northumberlands and the Royal Fusiliers advanced to capture the German second line. Some days of heavy fighting and bombardment followed. A vigorous effort on April 2 established the British lines well beyond the craters, four



[Canadian War Ke. oras.

**MAJOR-GENERAL SIR DAVID WATSON,**  
K.C.B.,  
Commanded the Fourth Canadian Division.

some mudhole. Large numbers of dead and wounded, British and German, lay around. There were in all seven craters, four large ones directly along the old German lines, and three older, smaller craters, two to the right and one to the left of the new craters. These old craters caused much confusion as they were unknown, and in the hand-to-hand fighting troops held on to them, imagining



that they were in the newer craters. The force of the great explosion seemed to have changed the very face of the countryside. The 27th (Winnipeg) battalion occupied part of the new front. Machine-guns were posted at different parts of the front and Lewis guns brought up. It had been impossible to take many of the wounded away from here, and they lay on the ground in the mud. It was scarcely possible to bring up food or water. The troops that had taken the position hardly knew their bearings. They were in a sea of mud.

General Turner, in command of the Second Division, realizing the great dangers of this position, at once planned a scheme for constructing fresh lines of trenches and consolidating the position. The British wounded were taken out under very heavy bombardment. The Canadians in part of the front line were suffering heavily, platoons losing more than half their strength in a very short time.



[Canadian War Records.]

**BRIG.-GENERAL V. W. ODLUM, C.B.,**

Commanded the 11th Canadian Brigade.

There was no cover and no shelter save shell holes and mud pits. The Germans had brought up considerable reinforcements in and behind the village of St. Eloi. Frequently, at irregular intervals, the Germans pushed forward through the mud, attacking at any possible point. After 60 hours in the front, in which it lost very heavily, the 27th battalion was relieved by the 29th (Vancouver) battalion, but under the conditions it was scarcely possible to keep

battalions together. On the night of April 6 the shelling, heavy as it had been before, was redoubled and at dawn the Germans launched an offensive. The Canadians fought furiously, but the mud clogged their machine-guns and put them out of action and blocked their rifles. It was impossible to use the bayonet effectively when struggling through mud which was sometimes waist deep. The Germans



[Canadian War Records.]

**BRIG.-GENERAL H. D. B. KETCHEN, C.B.,**  
Commanded the 6th Canadian Brigade.

recovered part of the crater front and drove the Canadians back over a large part of the new line.

The uncertainty about the position of the craters made it very difficult to concentrate artillery to resist German advances. The heavy continuous enemy shelling interrupted communications. Runners were swallowed up in mud in trying to move forward or back. Little parties of officers and men went out to occupy positions in shell holes and were never heard of again. The fighting was carried on in a great gale which added to the difficulties of keeping in touch. The Canadians immediately launched a series of counter-attacks. The reserves and supports of the 6th Brigade were moved forward and an attempt was made to recover the craters that had been lost. Heavy fighting continued during the night. The troops were unfamiliar with the ground and it was impossible to obtain exact direction. The storms prevented aeroplane observation and consequently our troops were working largely in the





CANADIANS AT ST. ELOI: CARRYING A MINED GERMAN OBSERVATION POST.



dark. The Canadians occupying the old craters to the right did not know that the Germans were holding two of the big new craters close to them. The Germans equally did not know that the Canadians were so near, as was shown by the fact that German patrols stumbling into the older craters in mistake for their own were taken prisoners.

On the next day the 4th Brigade under General Rennie, consisting of Ontario troops, came up and relieved the 6th Brigade which was tired out with the heavy fighting and terrible conditions. One battalion of the 6th Brigade alone, the 27th, had lost eight officers and 209 rank and file. The total losses of the Brigade in the three days had been 617 officers and men.

The 4th Brigade now attempted in turn to recover the lost craters. But all its efforts were in vain. On April 11-12 it was relieved at the front by the 5th Brigade under General Watson. The battle of the craters continued until April 20. The Canadians suffered from a great disadvantage of position. The Germans occupied the higher ground, and the shallow craters which they held afforded the very minimum of protection. Day after day the Germans launched bombing parties on them, sometimes as many as four on one day, and the artillery fire was such that at times no one could live under it. A whole party occupying a crater would be wiped out by shells. Then a fresh party would be sent to undergo the same experience. The Canadian troops knew even while they fought that they were serving no good purpose in attempting to hold on to the crater lips. The position, such as it was, could not be made of any military importance. The men who crept out through the mud into the terrible isolation of the shell holes and crater beds went as men conscious that they were engaged in a hopeless task. Yet they fought on obstinately, steadily. Their position was truthfully described by one of the men as "a mass of slimy mud full of dead bodies."

On April 16, when the weather permitted for the first time, aeroplane observers examined the position from above and discovered the real state of affairs. They found that amid the confusion on the shapeless earth there had been a misunderstanding which had prevented us using our artillery effectively against the enemy. On April 19 the enemy opened afresh a heavy bombardment. The two craters in our possession were held by

platoons. The men who were not killed or wounded by the shell fire were buried in mud time after time. The breech blocks of their rifles were choked with the mud and it was impossible to clear them. When the Germans started to come across the power of



[Elliott & Fry.

LIEUT.-COLONEL C. H. MITCHELL, C.B.,  
C.M.G.,

General Staff Officer (Intelligence).

resistance of the men in the craters was broken. The few survivors of the group in one crater surrendered. Of the survivors of the other group a few surrendered, but an officer and five men, fighting to the last, struck back across the open country. Only one man returned unwounded. This unwounded man had had his own brother and three of his comrades killed by his side in the crater before he left. The craters had to be abandoned. But if it was impossible for the Canadians to hold them the Germans found it equally impossible to retain possession of them, and they remained during the months that followed a grim and ugly No Man's Land between the two armies.

The result of the battle of the craters was a great disappointment to the whole Canadian Corps. The new line which it had taken over from the 5th Brigade was very different from the quiet sector held for many months before during the winter. The positions in Ypres itself and beyond Ypres were exposed to constant fire from commanding enemy positions. It was only possible to move supplies up to the front during the night and even then the roads were steadily shelled. Every day at irregular intervals the enemy bombardment of the Canadian lines of communication continued. Some of the points



on the new front were notoriously "unhealthy." The northern section of the front starting at Bellewaarde Beek ran out into a salient with the ruined village of Hoge to the left and with Sanctuary Wood and Observatory Ridge at the apex. Then the salient dipped in at Armagh Wood and Mount Sorrel to Hill 60. The last was one of the most fiercely contested bits of the line, where the Germans held the upper part of the



[Swaine.]

**MAJOR-GENERAL MERCER, C.B.,**  
Commanded the Third Canadian Division in 1916.

hill and the Canadians clung to the lower part despite constant shelling and assaults. The weeks that immediately followed were a test of endurance. There was little for the Canadians to do beyond counter-artillery fire and frequent raids into the enemy lines.

There were many signs that the enemy intended to attempt a serious offensive against the Hoge-Sanctuary Wood salient, and plans were made to deal with any such venture. Towards the end of May the fire of the enemy guns seemed to grow daily heavier. On the morning of June 2 Major-General Mercer, the Commander of the 3rd Division, went out on a journey to inspect the front lines, accompanied by Brigadier-General Victor Williams, an A.D.C., and a brigade orderly officer. General Mercer and his party were going up a communication trench to a section of the front lines held by the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, when suddenly without previous warning a

bombardment of almost unexampled severity opened on this part of the salient.

The Germans had clearly been preparing this blow for some time and had secretly massed and concealed a very large number of guns in commanding positions. Every survivor was agreed that never had they experienced or heard of artillery fire such as overwhelmed them. Trenches were wiped out. Gun positions and lines of communication disappeared. The whole front became in a few minutes a tangled mass of ruin. A few isolated survivors escaped. General Mercer was killed and his body was found later on in Armagh Wood. Brigadier-General Victor Williams was badly wounded and taken a prisoner. Two years afterwards he was returned to England, a physical wreck. One officer attempted to keep some men inside a shelter so as to be ready when the Germans attacked. The rain of shells blocked in the shelter and suffocated many of them. The 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles were practically wiped out that day, their casualties amounting to 637.

To the left of these the 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles were holding the line. These were very heavily punished also, but not to so great extent as the 4th. Colonel Shaw, of the 1st, rallied his men and put up a stubborn defence when the German assault started, wave after wave, at one o'clock. Colonel Shaw was killed. All his officers save two were killed or wounded, as were most of the N.C.O.'s. At the last extremity two lieutenants retired with 15 rank and file, the only survivors, into a fortified post behind. There some stragglers rallied around them. They renewed their resistance and held on until relief came to them the following day. The 1st Mounted Rifles lost in that fight 367 men. Two companies of the Princess Patricia's Regiment occupied part of the line. One company was almost wiped out by the same overwhelming fire which struck the Mounted Rifles. The survivors, however, clung on, supported by the support company. When the waves of approaching Germans reached the parts held by the Princess Patricia's their Commanding Officer, Colonel Buller—loved and esteemed by the whole Army—launched his surviving troops in counter-attacks and was himself killed as he was urging them on.

Brigadier-General Macdonell hurried up his reserves, prepared to resist to the last the German advance. The Princess Patricia's and the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles, with the





## CANADIAN HIGHLAND BATTALION.

remains of the 1st and 4th Mounted Rifles, held on at every possible point. Two companies of the King's Royal Rifles held our extreme left. The Germans had pushed right into Sanctuary Wood and occupied part of Observatory Ridge, part of Armagh Wood and Mount Sorrel. Had they pushed on in force it would scarcely have been possible for the attenuated Canadian forces to hold them back. Happily, thanks largely to the stubborn resistance of the Canadians, the German advance came to a pause. In some parts vigorous counter-attacks drove the Germans back part of the way, but there were hours in which it looked as though the road to Ypres was now open. The Canadians dug in on the new line. It was known that the Germans had been heavily reinforced and it was resolved to counter-attack with the least possible delay. Great difficulty was experienced in getting troops up in time and in coordinating the work of infantry and artillery. The heavy barrage fire maintained by the Germans prevented messengers getting through and broke the telephone wires.

At 7.10 a.m. on June 3, the counter-attack began. The enemy, during the few hours which they had held this front, had established machine-gun positions and had wired and dug themselves in. Fresh trenches had been built and the place put in a surprisingly good condition of defence. The machine-gun fire was deadly. Our attempts to the right and the centre were held up. An attempt was made on the left later in the day. It met with more success. But the great counter-attack was, taking it all in all, a failure. The main objects had not been achieved, although the British line had been improved at points and a position

secured from which it should be possible to resist any further German attempted advance. It was clear that the position could not be left as it was. The Germans were now holding points from which they looked right down into Ypres. These must be re-taken at any cost. Such an attempt must be preceded by full preparation. Accordingly a heavy force of artillery was secretly scattered behind. The 1st Division was to lead the assault.

General Currie was in command of the new operations and he gave further proof of his great gifts as a military leader. Nothing was left to chance. Everything was made ready. At 12.45 on the morning of June 13 the British artillery opened a very heavy fire on the German lines. The German front was wiped out, as the British had been a fortnight earlier. A heavy barrage was maintained behind to prevent reinforcements from coming up. At half-past one the artillery fire ceased and the infantry moved out. Toronto troops, the 3rd Battalion, led the way with the 16th, a Western Highland battalion, and to the left the Royal Highlanders of Canada. The Germans resisted obstinately, their artillery in particular causing heavy loss among Canadian troops. But before the night was over the British line had been re-established. The battle of Sanctuary Wood on June 13, 1916, ranked among the most creditable operations of the Canadians since the second battle of Ypres. The thoroughness of the preparation, the exact timing of the different operations and the perfect coordination attained success against a commanding enemy front where success had seemed for a time impossible.

The Canadian casualties during the month





[Canadian War Records.]

#### RUINS OF SUGAR REFINERY AT COURCELETTE.

of June were 11,540, which is sufficient proof of the severity of the fighting. General Mercier was followed in the command of the 3rd Division by General Fipsett, who had given proofs at Ypres and elsewhere of very high fighting qualities.

In August, 1916, the corps was ordered to go to the Somme to take part in the great battle there. The work of the Canadians in this battle has already been described in a previous chapter,\* so that it is only necessary here to bring out some of the special Canadian aspects of the fighting. The 1st Division under General Currie arrived at the Somme on September 1, and was followed shortly afterwards by the 2nd and 3rd Divisions. The 4th Division, which had just come out from England under General Watson, was not sent immediately to the Somme, but was kept for a time in the Ypres salient, where it quickly made a name for itself by the enterprise and daring of its men. Almost immediately after their arrival some battalions were hurried up to help the Australians and for some hours Canadians and Australians fought as one body. When an Australian officer fell, a Canadian would take his place. When a Canadian fell there was an Australian ready to lead. The Canadians relieved the Australians in the trenches behind Mouquet Farm, effecting the relief under very heavy fire. The Canadian troops in the exposed trenches suffered considerably from German shell fire and they were eager to find opportunity to strike against the enemy as quickly as possible.

On the morning of September 8, 200 Germans raided a part of the Canadian line, but were in the end driven out. On the following day the second battalion, from Eastern Ontario, attacked the trenches on the south-west of Courcellette, taking two machine-guns and 80 prisoners. The Germans counter-attacked, but in vain. There were signs, now, of heavy fighting ahead. On the morning of the 10th it was clear that the enemy were massing troops in preparation for an attack. They were also bombarding the line heavily. The Canadian artillery concentrated its fire on the German lines and broke up one section of the enemy. The second section pressed forward from Mouquet Farm, but was driven back.

The next few days were spent in almost continuous fighting and artillery work. On September 15 the Canadians launched a big attack. The forces employed were at first the Fourth Brigade, under Brigadier-General Rennie, and the 5th, under Brigadier-General Ketchen. The fighting that followed lasted three days. By a series of brilliant attacks the Germans were forced back over a mile beyond their original line. Mouquet Farm, the sugar refinery and the village of Courcellette were occupied after desperate fighting. No less than 1,200 prisoners were taken. The capture of Courcellette was mainly accomplished by French Canadians, Nova Scotians and a New Brunswick battalion, men of the Fifth Brigade, under General A. H. Maedonell. These troops were called into the fight in the afternoon. They hurried forward at short notice covered by a barrage, and stormed Courcellette at the point of the bayonet. The Germans were overwhelmed. The sheer force

\* Chapter CLXXV.



of the wave carried it clean over the enemy. The battle of Courcelette was considered by the Canadians themselves as a victory worthy to follow Ypres and that was the view taken of it generally by the Army.

The enemy were by no means content to leave the Canadians to hold their positions. They launched fresh counter-attacks and increased their artillery fire. The counter-attacks, however, failed to do more than to give the enemy temporary entry into a trench, or at the most to give them an advanced post.

The next object of Canadian attack was

dians had to retire once more with their prisoners.

On October 17 the Fourth Division, which had now come down from the Ypres salient, took part in the fighting and prepared to attack Regina Trench. Its preparations were greatly hindered by the bad weather. But on October 21 an attack was launched by the Eleventh Brigade, after very careful preparation, and the first objective was taken. On October 22 the Tenth Brigade took over the attack, and another great effort was made on October 25 against the portion of Regina Trench still



[Canadian War Records.]

#### BRIGADE MACHINE-GUNNERS DIGGING THEMSELVES IN.

Regina Trench. The operation here was far more difficult and had to be done in stages with many set-backs. A great attack was launched on October 1 when the Canadian troops reached part of their objective but were unable to remain there. On October 8 the First and Third Divisions attacked the German positions from Dyke Road around a criss-cross formation of strong German trenches known as the Quadrilateral. Here Ontario troops got into enemy trenches and worked their way through as a bombing party, capturing close on 200 German prisoners. Here, too, it was found impossible to hold the position in view of the strong German counter-attacks, and the Cana-

remaining in German hands. A strong assault was made on November 11 and as a result of it the whole of the Regina Trench fell into our hands. It had taken over a month of obstinate and costly fighting and those who examined afterwards the poor mud heap found it hard to think that a spot so mean could resist so long and could have cost so many lives to take.

The weather was now to prove one of the Germans' greatest allies. The autumn rains brought the autumn mud, and the mud on the Somme was such, thanks to the sifting and tearing up the earth had received from shell-fire, that men were drowned in it like flies in



treacle. Up to this time the Canadians had been inclined to compare the conditions on the Somme favourably with those at Ypres. On the Somme it was at least possible to make some advance and to go out against the enemy instead of remaining under perpetual fire. But the mud changed everything for the worse. The three first divisions had by this time moved up north and it was left to the Fourth Division to face the most trying time of all. The mud and cold did not, however, check their offensive spirit. On November 18 they made an attack

towns such as Bully-Grenay and villages like Souchez. Much of it was coal mining land full of fosses and smouldering slag heaps, wrecked pit heads and shafts. To the south the country became more agricultural. Some distance behind the lines there lay the ruins of the beautiful old abbey of Mont St. Eloi. Tradition declared that a large part of the countryside was undermined with tunnels, partly natural owing to the chalk formation of the land and partly built by the mediæval churchmen. It was believed by the natives that one tunnel



[Canadian War Records.]

#### UNLOADING THE CHRISTMAS POST.

on Desire Trench and captured many prisoners. The Battle of the Somme was drawing to a close. On November 24 the Fourth Division moved north to join the remainder of the Corps on its new ground. The entire Corps now made ready for the part that had been allotted to it in the proposed offensive in the spring of 1917.

The new Canadian front stretched from north of the Lorette Ridge to the east of Roelincourt. The region had witnessed the most desperate fighting in the French offensive of 1915. It included the Souchez Valley, the Labyrinth, La Targette, Neuville St. Vaast, ruined mining

ran from Mont. St. Eloi to Arras and that others connected Arras with the great natural caves on the hillside of Vimy.

The British lines ran near the top of Vimy Ridge, a commanding eminence 475 feet high. This ridge had changed hands several times during the war. The crest of it was now and had been for some time held by the Germans. Their position gave them command over many miles behind the British front, and it was only possible to approach the front trenches in day-time through an extensive system of communicating trenches. Vimy Ridge was the military key to this part of France. So long as it re-



mained in German hands the whole country around it and Arras to the south were menaced. The honour of attempting the capture was to be given to the Canadians.

The winter was spent in training and raiding. The German troops holding the ridge were at first of a very inferior type, but as the Canadian raids grew their calibre steadily improved. Most of the raids were successful. One new departure was attempted by the Canadian Mounted Rifles on December 20—a new system of daylight raid, by which a smoke screen—from smoke shells—was placed behind one section of the enemy's lines and a machine-gun barrage on either side, thus completely boxing the enemy in. Then, following a creeping barrage, the troops advanced, entered the enemy trenches with very little loss, cleared them up, blew up dugouts and ammunition dumps, and retired before enemy reserves could come up to counter-attack them.

A large raid attempted on March 2 by a brigade of the Fourth Division was a failure. Two thousand troops set out, and their advance was preceded by a gas attack. Their coming was anticipated, and the enemy were in force to resist them. The wind veered as they started over the top, and the gas came back. There were several hundred casualties.

The Canadians made elaborate preparations for the coming attack on Vimy Ridge. The enemy position was very carefully observed by raiding parties and by aerial photographers. A duplicate dummy set of trenches was dug some way behind the lines, and the troops were exercised on these, under conditions resembling as nearly as possible those they would have to face on the critical day. The fullest details of what was to be done, and how it was proposed to do it, were prepared by the General Staff and were circulated among the troops. Brigadiers instructed their battalion officers, and subalterns instructed their platoons, showing them maps, plans, and photographs. The result of this was that every man entered the battle knowing what was expected of him, what conditions he would probably have to meet, and the best methods to adopt. A large number of guns of all calibres were brought up behind the lines, siege groups of heavy and medium howitzers and trench-mortars, counter-battery groups, and numerous six-gun batteries of 18-pounders. Many of these were concealed and not used until the day of battle.

During the winter the Canadians had

specially developed training in the platoon system for infantry. They strove as far as possible to make each platoon a self-contained team in which the officer and his men were accustomed to work together, had got to know one another, and had discovered how to back up each other most effectively. Each team formed a complete unit, carrying with it all it required for its operations. The platoons worked at methods of attack by hand grenade and rifle grenade upon machine-gun positions. This training was to prove very useful.

The Germans believed the Vimy Ridge position to be impregnable. They held the upper ground. A considerable part of the No Man's Land was broken up by big craters, leaving only narrow paths over which troops could advance. There were a number of concrete machine-gun emplacements, particularly to the north of the hill in the direction of Givenchy. When it became evident that a serious attack was impending, the Germans began to build a number more of these. They were so built that it was very difficult to locate them by means of aerial photographs. The eastern slope of the hill dropped down sharply, enabling the Germans to place a number of guns in the woods below, in positions that were strongly protected against counter-artillery attack by the angle of the hill. A number of the ruined houses in the villages of Petit Vimy and Vimy in the eastern valley had been turned into virtual fortresses, being cased with ferro-concrete sometimes several feet thick, and supported by doors and shutters of chilled steel. In the villages still farther beyond in the valley, other German batteries had been placed, and for these still more ferro-concrete emplacements had been built.

General von Bacmeister, of the 79th Reserve Division of the German Army, in a report dated March 30th, 1917, stated that there was a marked concentration of British troops on both sides of Arras, and that the spring offensive of the *Entente* would be most likely staged in this vicinity.

North of Arras [he wrote] the British will be forced, according to the nature of the ground, to deliver a joint attack on the long narrow Vimy Ridge, the possession of which would give them command of the high ground in this vicinity. They would also be a safeguard against German attacks on the left British flank near Arras. Opposite his division, he pointed out, Canadians were placed. The Canadians are known to be good troops and are therefore well suited for assaulting. There are no deserters to be found among the Canadians. . . . It appears, taking everything into consideration, that a programme of systematic destruction of artillery



positions, dug-outs, rearward positions and the front line, particularly on the divisional flanks, has been put in force. If there are no signs of immediate attack, still it is very certain that the Canadians are planning an attack on a large scale in the immediate future, and both flanks of the division can be considered the chief points where the attack will be pushed home. The statement of a prisoner captured early to-day that the attack was to take place between March 20th and April 6th confirms the above.

Von Baemeister's forecast was on the whole very accurate, except for the date when the offensive was to begin. The attack on Vimy was only part of the great Allied advance on the Arras front. For purposes of attack the Canadians narrowed their front, their boundaries being from the Souchez River to the south of Neuville St. Vaast, about 8,000 yards in all. This front was split up into four sections. The First Division was placed on the right, the Second Division came next to it on the front immediately facing Neuville St. Vaast. Then came the Third Division, with the Fourth Division on the extreme left. Some British troops aided in the centre. The system of advance adopted was by waves. The troops of each division were divided into four sections. Following a heavy bombardment and a creeping barrage, the first section was to make for one definite point known as the Black Line. When it reached that, it was to dig itself in

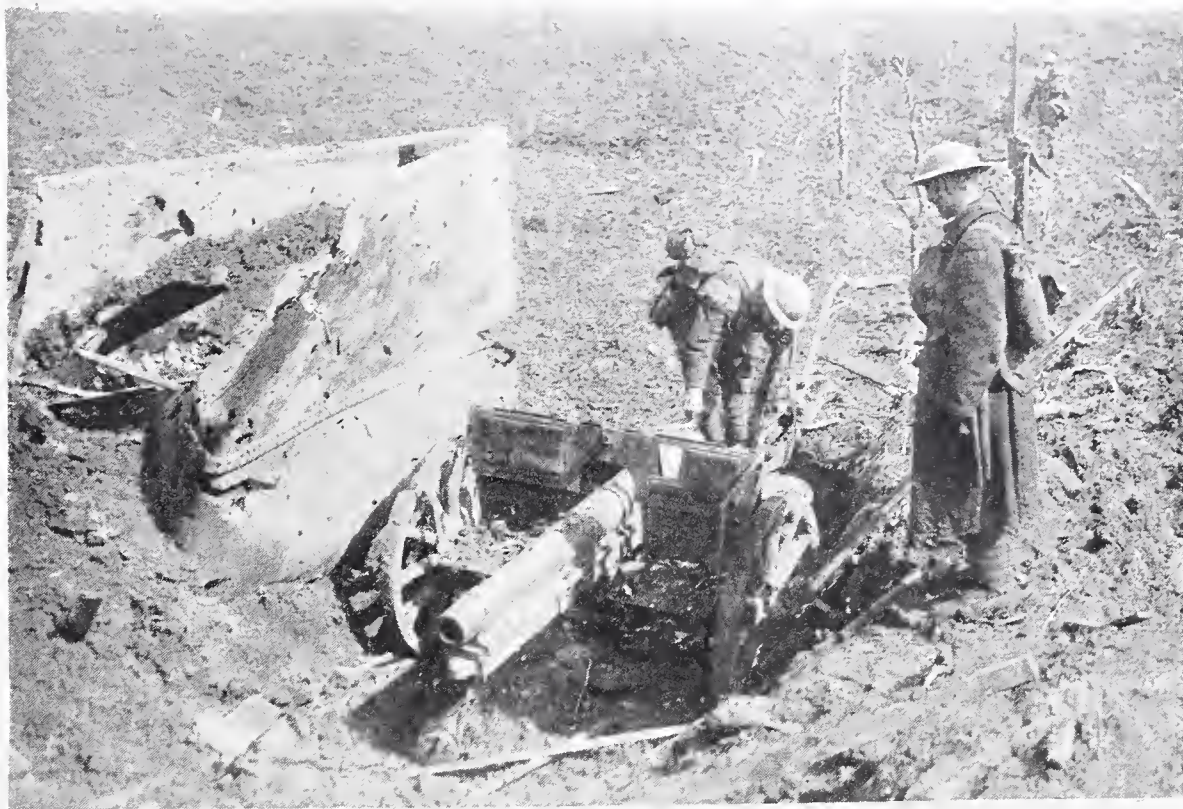
and "moppers up" were to clean up the area behind, destroying dugouts and searching for snipers. Then after a pause of 40 minutes the second section was to advance to the Red Line. After another pause of two hours a third body of troops was to pass over it to attack the Blue Line, and while it held its position the fourth was to come through it to the final objective. The final barrage would die down eight and a half hours after the offensive began and forward batteries were then to be sent out. The Black Line was the German front line. The Brown Line, the final objective, was along the eastern end of Vimy Ridge and at the bottom of the ridge. Tanks were being brought up to help in the offensive, and the chalky nature of the country had enabled an extensive system of tunnels to be built, by which troops and munitions could be brought forward to the front lines without loss. The exact distance which each division had to cover varied according to the nature of the country. The final objective of the First Division on the right was about two and a half miles from the British front line. The final objective of the Fourth on the left was very much less owing to the nature of the country which had to be crossed.



FIRING A CAPTURED GERMAN 4.2 HOWITZER.

[Canadian War Records.]





[Canadian War Reports.]

## GERMAN GUNS CAPTURED AT THELUS.

On the night of April 8 the Canadian troops moved into the trenches. The Germans were uneasy, believing that some attempt was imminent. Flares were constantly sent up and some parts of the trenches were shelled, causing a number of casualties. At this time hand grenades were still extensively employed and each man carried four Mills No. 5 hand grenades. The troops were equipped in full Service marching order with haversacks on their backs but with no packs. Each man had on him two days' rations besides his iron ration, and had his mess tin hung outside his haversack, box respirator over all his equipment and besides his battle order carried a pick and shovel, two sandbags placed under braces across the back, two aeroplane flares in the bottom pocket of the jacket, a candle, a box of matches, a Verey light, and 120 rounds of small arm ammunition. There was an extraordinary spirit of keenness displayed by all ranks. Their *moral* had never been surpassed, and they had supreme confidence in the success of the coming enterprise. The Commanding Officers attributed this in part to the lectures and discussions, the practices over taped trenches, and to the fact that each man had a very clear idea of what was expected

of him and his battalion and of how best to accomplish it.

A few minutes before "zero hour" the enemy fire redoubled. Two mortars to the right were destroyed and 250 rounds, the entire stock of ammunition, blown up. At 5.30 the British barrage opened. Its effects were overwhelming. British aircraft had located a number of German batteries during the previous days. They had been left alone until this occasion. Now British batteries in hitherto unknown and unsuspected positions opened out on them. Over two-thirds of the British guns were firing from entirely new places and the German counter-battery work consequently could not be effective. The advancing infantry were surprised that the German shell fire was not heavier against them. This was due to the great and unsuspected blow by the British artillery. Under the heavy rain of British fire the larger part of the German front trenches were so completely destroyed that it was scarcely possible to distinguish where they had been, when the advancing troops reached them.

The weather conditions were appalling. In many of the jumping off places the mud was three feet thick and icy cold. The night had



turned to rain and the rain to beating snow. No Man's Land was, over the greater part of it, a mass of deep shell holes. Badly wounded men who fell into these shell holes died ; it was impossible to rescue them and impossible for them to escape. The first part of the advance up to the German front trenches was the easiest of the whole. Even here, however, the Canadians were met at every turn by heavy machine-gun fire. The men advancing close behind the barrage became occasionally impatient at their slow pace and tried to pass through it. When they saw the enemy retiring they wanted to follow them. Over most of the way the wire was completely smashed and formed no obstacle whatever.

The battalions kept in close touch. Every German machine-gun company that was located was systematically attacked with hand grenades and rifle grenades. While sections of a platoon attacked it in the front, picked members of the platoons would creep behind and attempt to rush its company. There were many instances of distinguished gallantry in the fight against the machine-guns.

The German second line, the Red Line, was heavily manned. Immediately the barrage moved, Germans rushed out of dugouts and caves. There was a fierce contest at a well-prepared position with close support trench on rising ground which commanded the whole area west to south-west. The trench positions generally were very elaborate, line after line, well joined up with strong machine-gun emplacements and elaborate defences of the most modern type. The Canadians pressed through, walking behind the barrage at a rate little faster than a slow march, each party digging itself in as it reached its objective and cleaning up the ground thoroughly behind it. Each section as it reached its destination started to construct strong machine-gun positions there and block the trenches, platoons from it immediately setting out as carrying parties to take back the wounded.

A quarter of an hour after the attack began German prisoners were coming in. Good reports of progress were sent back from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Divisions. The 4th Division found itself held up, however, by a number of newly-constructed German machine-gun emplacements grouped around an elevated position known as the "Pimple." The troops strove time after time to make progress here, but the machine-gun fire was too strong for

them. Towards the centre of the ridge the Canadians swept over and captured a group of caves, and numbers of Germans came out from these and surrendered. These caves, deep under the earth and very extensive, had been, according to local tradition, a place of refuge for Huguenots in the days of religious persecution, where they came from Arras and from the neighbouring villages to hide and to worship.

At the scheduled time the Canadians to the right and the centre reached the top of the Ridge and were able to look down from there on the great valley beneath, stretching away to Douai. Some of the older German concrete machine-gun positions on the hill-top had not proved of much service to the enemy and their gunners had preferred to come out in the open. This probably was partly due to the fact that these positions had been located and were being heavily shelled by our artillery. Sweeping down through the Farbus Wood on the other side of the Ridge the Canadians came under fire from concealed German machine-guns in ruined houses in Petit Vimy. One of these houses, looking an absolute wreck, was reinforced inside by walls and roof of concrete 39 inches thick. Underneath it was a well-protected dug-out. The corner of the house was a solid concrete mass, nine feet thick, with hollows left in it sufficiently large to hold machine-guns from which the roads could be raked.

Apparently the British artillery fire was so effective that it completely destroyed the German means of communication, whether by telephone or runners. When the Canadians, pressing on in spite of the machine-gun fire, reached the outskirts of the village of Petit Vimy, officers came out of their elaborate dug-outs to see what was the matter and were surprised to find themselves surrounded and captured.

The weather made the going of the troops very hard. The mud was such that it was impossible for the tanks to get forward. Even field batteries were held up and the utmost efforts of men and horses failed to extricate them from the mud.

At the end of the first day an advance had been made of about 4,000 yards on the right, tapering down to about 1,200 yards to the left of the 3rd Division. The 4th Division had made the least advance of all, owing to the strength of the enemy's concrete emplace-



ments fronting it; its gain had been so small that day as to be almost negligible. The Canadians had taken 3,600 prisoners and a considerable number of field and heavy guns and trench mortars. The Germans had on the whole fought well. Some of them had hidden in the eaves in place of coming out in the open and fighting, and some had retreated as the Canadians advanced. But the machine-gunners and snipers had fought with particular ob-

fighting succeeded in the end in clearing out the German dug-outs.

On April 13 there were signs that the Germans were attempting a general withdrawal. General McBrien with a small party of men pushed into the village of Givenchy and found that only a few snipers were left there among the ruins. One of the snipers shot the General but not dangerously. A troop of Canadian Light Horse went out as a patrol towards the



[Canadian War Records.]

#### GERMAN OFFICERS TAKEN AT VIMY RIDGE.

stinacy. The artillerymen holding one line of concrete gun emplacements kept on, although they could see the Canadians coming down the hill on them, and fired their last rounds when our troops were a couple of score yards away. The victory of Vimy was won not because of the weakness of the enemy, but because of the superior organization and spirit of the attacking troops, because they were able to concentrate a tremendous volume of fire on the enemy position, and because their infantry had been trained to meet and destroy machine-gun defences.

During the next three days the weather was such that it was possible to do little save on the left flank, where, despite the weather, the 4th Division pressed forward and after very hard

Arleux loop and also towards Mont Forêt quarries. The Canadians had been feeling their way through Vimy village. That day they occupied a further line from the village of Wilerval on the right to Cité de Gaumont on the left.

The next day they pushed on through the great valley, meeting with considerable resistance at many points. The Germans had now rallied. Their artillery from the ruined towns and villages in the rear was maintaining a very active bombardment. Fresh troops had been brought up. Woods and ruins, loops and fosses were all held. By the evening of April 14, however, the forward movement had been continued, and the Canadians found themselves face to face on their left and centre with the villages



of Avion and Mericourt. These places constituted a great line of wrecked buildings—mining villages, electric power works, mine heads, breweries and factories. The advance could not go farther forward at this point, for a line of



[Canadian War Records.]

MAJOR T. W. MACDOWELL, V.C.

connected ruins such as these, when properly prepared, constituted an almost impassable barrier. Lens, a very similar place, had held up every effort to take it for nearly two years. To the right it was possible, however, to push on, and the Canadians advanced to Fresnoy, reaching there on May 3 after a considerable battle. Fresnoy was very difficult to hold. The Canadians handed it over immediately to other troops, who shortly afterwards had to retire on part of that front. The total Canadian advance at its maximum during this fight was six miles (10,333 yards). The Canadian casualties during April, 1917, amounted to 11,492.

The battle of Vimy Ridge was a great triumph. But the question arises why when so much was gained on the first day, the final gain in territory was not greater? For this there were several reasons. The progress of the British forces in an offensive was still hampered by lack of mobility in light artillery. It was impossible immediately after the fight to get the guns forward owing to the mud. It was still regarded as an axiom that the limit of an infantry advance was fixed by the range of the supporting artillery. This was an axiom which, like many others, was later to be cast aside. The sustained spell of very bad weather

which followed the capture of the ridge itself made it almost impossible to bring forward supplies. It taxed the troops to the full and hampered progress in many ways.

The Canadians advancing outpaced their right flank. Their progress depended to a great extent upon the advance of the entire British forces, and it, in turn, on the simultaneous French advance. The comparative failure of the French attack had its immediate effect on the British movement. Had it been possible to push entirely fresh troops on, in the afternoon of the first day of the attack, they might have made their way through the group of mining villages. But once the Germans rallied, it became impossible to rush them, and the attempt, if made, must have ended disastrously. The capture of Vimy Ridge was a great feat of arms. It gave the Allied Armies a barrier that was to prove of the greatest value in the months that were to follow. It protected the northern flank of Arras, and presented a commanding position between Arras and Lens.

One minor element after the battle of Vimy Ridge should not be passed without notice. There had been during the past few years ever-growing relations between the people of Bermuda and the Canadians, and it was fitting that the Bermuda contingent of R.G.A. should serve with the Canadian Corps during the operations of May and June, 1917. They were employed on heavy ammunition dumps and great satisfaction was expressed with their work. "This was the first show which the battery had entirely on its own," wrote the officer in charge, "and so far as one can judge from the comments of officers who had experience of the work done, every satisfaction was given." The Corps Commanders wrote:

Your unit has been working on ammunition supply in this area since April, 1917, and though sustaining severe casualties and latterly working under the most trying climate conditions, the work done has been constantly good. On your leaving the Corps, the Corps Commander wishes his appreciation conveyed to all ranks.\*

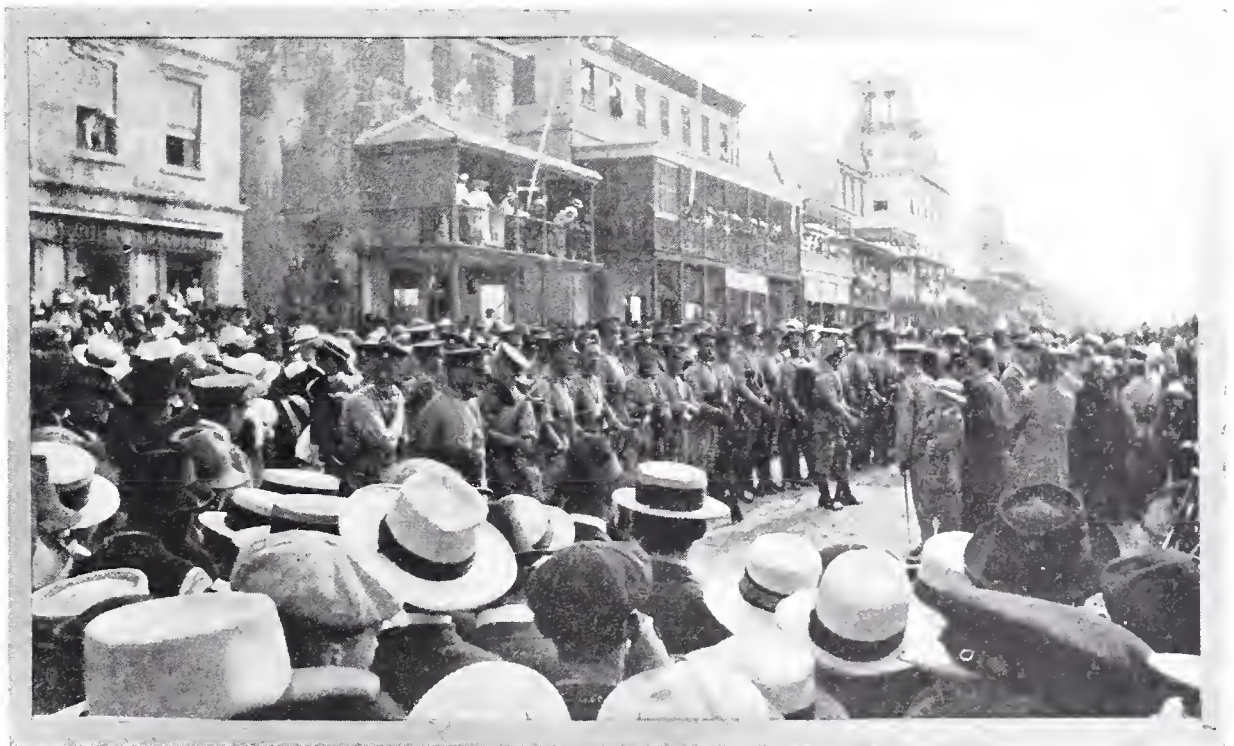
Four Canadians gained the Victoria Cross in the fighting around Vimy. Major Macdowell, the son of an Ontario Methodist Minister, who had already earned the D.S.O. for capturing three enemy machine-guns and 50 prisoners in the fighting of the previous November, won the highest decoration for a very gallant and successful attempt in rounding up a strong

\* For further reference to the Bermuda Contingents see pp. 101-2 of this volume.



enemy machine-gun post. He, assisted by two runners, captured the two guns, two officers, and 75 men. Lieutenant F. M. W. Harvey took part with his regiment in an attack on a village, when a party of the enemy occupying a wired trench just in front of the village opened rapid rifle and machine-gun fire at short range, causing heavy casualties in the leading troop. While the fire was at its height, Lieutenant Harvey, who was in command of that troop, ran forward well ahead of his men, pushed straight for the trench, fully manned as it was, jumped the wire, shot the machine-gunner, and captured the gun. Lieutenant Harvey, who was Irish born, was a rancher in Alberta in private life. Lance-Sergeant E. W. Sifton, of the Western Ontario Regiment, lost his life in winning his decoration. His company was held up by machine-gun fire, which was inflicting heavy losses on it. Sifton located the gun position, rushed straight at it and killed the crew. When a small enemy party advanced down the trench he kept them off until our men had gained the position. In doing so he was killed. Sifton was an Ontario farmer before the war. Private W. J. Milne, of the Manitoba Regiment, the fourth of the group, had also been a farmer. As our troops were approaching their first objective, Milne noticed that an enemy machine-gun was firing on them. He crawled close to it on his hands and knees, killed the crew

with hand grenades, and captured the gun. When our line was reinforced, he again located a machine-gun in the enemy support line, and stalked this second gun as he had the first, capturing it also. Shortly afterwards he himself was killed. A fifth Cross was won afterwards, and posthumously given to Lieutenant R. G. Combe, of the Manitoba Regiment. Mr. Combe, the son of an Aberdeen business man, was a chemist in business at Melville, Sask., when war broke out. His company, in the fighting in May came under heavy fire, but he led them through the enemy barrage, reaching their objective with only five men. He then coolly proceeded to bomb the enemy. He gathered the little group of his men and charged the enemy time after time, hurling bombs on them. A large number of the enemy were killed, and in the end 80 surrendered. While personally leading the bombers, Lieutenant Combe was killed by a German sniper. A sixth name was added to this list shortly afterwards, Private J. B. Pattison, a Calgary man, born in Woolwich, England, who was fighting on June 3 when the advance of our troops was held up by an enemy machine-gun, he sprang forward with utter disregard of his own safety, and jumping from shell hole to shell hole got within 30 yards of the enemy. Here, though under heavy fire, he hurled bomb after bomb at the Germans, killing and wounding some of the crew, and



DEPARTURE OF THE FIRST BERMUDA CONTINGENT.



then rushed forward again and bayoneted the five surviving gunners.\*

The object before the Canadians was now to make a way through the semi-circle of mining towns which faced them. From Lièvin on the north-west to Fresnoy on the south the ruined villages barred the way. Before the war this had been a great industrial centre. Village had become linked up with village by factories and works of different kinds. All these places the Germans had turned into a tangle of defences. Lens itself had stood as an obstacle in the Allies' path since 1915. It was impossible to get around it. The houses were all ruins. There was not an unbroken pane of glass in the place, not an untouched roof, not a wall that remained whole. The roads were torn up, the trees were brown and shrivelled by the gas of the shells, or torn with shrapnel. The gardens were mere wrecks. Around Lens the scene was one of unspeakable desolation. The slag heaps from the mines, slag heaps on which nothing grew, covered part of the front of the Souchez River. The railway line showed nothing now

\* For the awards here mentioned see chapters on "Victoria Crosses of the War," especially Vol. XIII, Chapter CCV.

but gnarled, twisted, and torn sleepers and lines. The river had overflowed its banks in places, or in some cases had been made to overflow, being dammed up by the Germans. This added areas of mud. In some of the side tracks bodies lay as they fell; in others the constant shell-fire hurled bones from their resting places, and attacking parties creeping along would come upon bleached skulls and bones lying unhid to the side. Inside this line of villages the Germans had exhausted their ingenuity in devising new means of protection. Ferro-concrete was very largely used to give strength to gun positions and observation posts. Some dugouts were protected by five feet layers of concrete over them. At every turn hidden machine-gun places had been built. Holes had been scooped out of the embankments to hold them. The thick walls of the gardens were made ready for riflemen. To take these places by direct assault, particularly to take Lens itself by direct assault, must mean a very heavy sacrifice of life, as the men would have to fight from house to house and from street to street, and every house could be made into a veritable fortress.

General Currie, who had now succeeded to the Canadian Command, determined to attempt



MACHINE-GUN EMPLACEMENT IN RUINED THELUS.

[Canadian War Records.]





[Canadian official photograph.]

## THE LENS-ARRAS ROAD AS SEEN FROM PETIT VIMY.

the capture of Lens,\* not by direct assault but by securing control of commanding positions on either side. The Canadians, steadily advancing, had got into the village of Lièvin fronting Lens, and had made their way right through it, but the two armies faced one another along the outer streets of Lens itself, the rival lines being at points, such as in the neighbourhood of Hill 65, almost within stone's throw.

On the morning of August 15, 1917, the Canadian forces which had swung round to the north of Lens opened an attack upon Hill 70, a commanding position just above the town. Every endeavour had been made to keep the movement as secret as possible, but the Germans knew of it, had their trenches fully manned, and were ready to resist with all their strength. A little after four o'clock the Canadian artillery began to cover the hill with shells of all kinds, high explosive, shrapnel, and oil drums. Then a creeping barrage opened and the Canadians went forward. To the left the Germans came out to meet them, and came right under our barrage. There was a dense morning mist hanging over the country. It was thought that the Germans had planned an assault on our lines at the same time as we had planned one on theirs. Just as our troops set out a German barrage opened, and the troops had to advance through a rain of shells. When the Canadians and the German storm-troops came

face to face, there ensued a hand-to-hand conflict of the severest possible kind. The Germans stood their ground obstinately and fought hard, but the impetus and the verve of the Canadian attack carried all before it. In a very few minutes the Canadians had cleaned up the Germans, and were soon on Hill 70 itself. They took about 1,100 prisoners, routing men out of dugouts and out of houses.

After storming the enemy's first trench system, the troops kept on as far as the western defences of the Cité St. Auguste, penetrating the German positions to the depth of about a mile. They were furiously counter-attacked by picked German troops, including Prussian Guards. Five counter-attacks were made in a very short time, and all were successfully beaten off. Still more followed the same night, and before long these counter-attacks numbered 21. Most of these were made with the utmost resolution. In one the Germans succeeded in pressing the line back slightly at one point, but the Canadians struck out again and recovered their position. The capture of Hill 70 was followed by many days of continuous fierce fighting. The German artillery rained gas shells on the place and used every device, including flame-throwers, to drive the Canadians out. The counter-attacks of the Germans were met by fresh raids by the Canadians.

On Tuesday, August 21, they attacked the line of German trenches skirting the town of Lens on the west and north-west, and captured

\* See Chapter CCXX.



a position on a front of 2,000 yards, taking 194 prisoners. On Thursday, August 23, they advanced again, this time against an important enemy stronghold immediately south of Lens known as the Green Crassier.

I desire to congratulate you personally on the complete and important success with which your Command of the Canadian Corps has been inaugurated [wrote Sir Douglas Haig to Sir Arthur Currie]. The Divisions you employed on August 15 totally defeated four German Divisions whose losses are reliably estimated at more than double those suffered by the Canadian troops. The skill, bravery and determination shown in the attack and in maintaining the positions won against repeated heavy counter attacks were in all respects admirable.

Among many messages of congratulation came one from the Government to the Corps Commander. General Currie's reply was noteworthy.

Your message of congratulation is sincerely appreciated by all ranks of the Canadian Corps. Tell our comrades in Canada and the Militia that, in addition to winning and consolidating ground of great tactical value, we have inflicted casualties on the foe at least treble our own. In repeated determined counter-attacks the flower of the German Army has been thrown against us, but our line has remained as unshaken as our own Rockies. Will not the pride which you say Canada has in her sons inspire her to send us men to take the place of those who have so nobly fallen?

The Canadian losses were considerable. That was inevitable in view of the nature of the fighting. The number of acts of personal gallantry was unusually high. The Canadians earned more decorations for deeds in this battle than in any other battle they had so far fought.

One blow more and Lens would have been in British hands. The blow could not be taken without considerable preparation, and while these preparations were nearing completion the Canadians were called elsewhere. The battle of the Belgian Ridges, the great autumn advance in which the Messines Ridge had fallen and the British front had been pushed some miles beyond Ypres, had not gone so well as was hoped. Unspeakably bad weather had hung up parts of our movement. One section of the German front, the commanding heights of Passchendaele, had foiled every effort to capture it. Sir Douglas Haig summoned the Canadian Corps from Lens to make a final effort to take the Ridge.

The problem before General Currie was a serious one. The German position around Passchendaele was exceedingly strong. The enemy were supported by ample artillery. The British lines were exposed and difficult of access.

The strip of country between Ypres and the British front was some five miles deep and was a mass of shell holes. Very little work had been done on it since the district had been captured a few weeks earlier. There were practically no roads. There was a lack of protected and concealed positions for artillery. The Germans had every position registered, and could rain fire upon it. The German aircraft were very active and strong in numbers and continually came over our lines both by day and by night, observing and bombing. There was little time in which to make preparations. It was mid-October before the Canadians arrived. Within two or three weeks the winter weather would make an active advance practically impossible.

General Currie concentrated his strength upon improving his lines of communication. Plank roads which the Canadians had introduced with great success in the fighting around Vimy were constructed across the shell-torn country. Thousands of men were put to work, making rough foundations and then placing a double line of planks across the mud. There was a light railway. This was strengthened and extended. Day and night, under almost continuous German fire, this work of building great avenues to the front continued. The Germans, knowing where the roadways must come, rained their fire on these points. The Canadians put their dead on one side, tore out the broken parts and built afresh. Along these roads munitions and supplies were brought up. Long lines of transports went out beyond Ypres as far as it was possible for them to go; where motor wagons could go no farther, lines of pack mules took up the work, and where pack mules could not go, men carried through munitions.

The German position consisted of a series of ridges and spurs, ridge after ridge, and spur after spur, to a depth of a mile and a half, interspersed with copses and valleys. The Canadian line ran from the old railway near Defe Crossing on the right to Wallemolen on the left, a distance of about 3,000 yards. The foremost point was Bellevue Spur, with Wolf Copse on the left of it and Dad Trench to the right. The Germans had built here a large number of concrete emplacements, "pill boxes," and "dreadnoughts." Owing to the nature of the ground, which was exceedingly treacherous, they could not build ordinary dug-outs. The "pill boxes" took their place. At



every commanding point there were machine-gun forts; some held one, some several machine-guns. Some of these were entered by tunnels opening up several score yards behind. Thanks to this, attacking troops even when they reached the places could not enter them. There were also large concrete huts where the German troops took cover during our barrage, emerging as soon as it lifted. These huts were of enormous thickness, and were impervious to anything but the very heaviest shell fire. There was no

and munitions above their heads. At certain parts, when men fell their bodies were, after a time, sucked under the earth, the shifting mud being insufficient to carry them.

The German Army was in a triumphant mood. At Vimy the enemy were greatly discouraged. Now recent victories in Italy and the collapse of Russia had sent a new spirit of confidence through their ranks. The very prisoners came in to the British lines with an air of almost insolent superiority. This spirit



[Canada War Records.]

#### A CAPTURED GERMAN GUN POSITION NEAR LENS.

time to keep on shelling them so as to smoke the enemy out. The Germans had abandoned their old plan of trench warfare. They were fighting now not by trenches but by positions, fighting, if necessary, from shell hole to shell hole. This increased the problem for the attackers, because of the absence of definite points for concentrating artillery fire.

The Germans were enormously aided by the weather. The wet autumn had turned the lowlands into almost impassable bogs, which surpassed anything the Canadians had known before even on the Somme. Men had to wade at times through bog lands holding their rifles

of confidence showed itself in the German fighting qualities. The enemy stood up to our troops better than they had ever done before.

The first attack was made shortly before dawn on Friday, October 26. The attacking forces were drawn from the 3rd and 4th Divisions. They were split into three sections. The Canadian Mounted Rifles advanced on the left from Wolf Copse, working towards the right in the direction of Bellevue Spur. The Cameron Highlanders directly attacked the spur, while an Ontario battalion made for the Dad Trench. Shortly before the start a heavy rain storm began, making the mud worse than



ever and rendering observation very difficult. The Canadian artillery, which was handled so magnificently through this fighting that, even although inferior in numbers, it was able to out-class that of the Germans, opened the attack with the usual tremendous fire. The troops engaged in the direct attack on the spur at once found themselves up against a line of three concrete buildings just below the crest of the hill. One of these had been wrecked by our artillery, and the bodies of the dead Germans could be seen inside it. The second was somewhat damaged, and the third practically intact. The "pill boxes" were taken, and then the Camerons moved on in two parties. The men to the right reached a forward position on the spur. There they found themselves apparently isolated. They could not learn what was going on owing to the mist and the rain. It was impossible to put up their flares owing to the wet. The officer sent scouts out to the right, who came back with the report that the Canadian troops which had attacked Dad Trench had been repulsed and had fallen back. Scouts came back from the left with word that the little group there had been all killed. The officer in charge held on for some time: then he

reluctantly gave word to fall back, believing that if he stayed on his troops must be surrounded and captured.

The report that the Ontario troops had been repulsed in their attacks against Dad Trench was true. They had been caught by enfilading fire, and the ground was so muddy and so difficult that they could scarcely keep pace with their barrage. When they reached the edge of the enemy trench the enemy counter-attacked, and there was a fierce fight around the shell holes. The Canadians found themselves overborne. The men fought with the utmost heroism, officers and rank and file, badly wounded, still fighting on, but they were steadily forced back to their old line. They retired, however, with a number of prisoners, one officer alone capturing 63 prisoners in this first advance. The Canadian Mounted Rifles were fighting their way around Wolf Copse, fighting hard and meeting with very heavy resistance. The news which came back was anything but encouraging. It seemed for a time as though the Canadian advance was to be a repetition of previous failures.

Then occurred a dramatic incident. Lieutenant Shankland, of the Cameron Highlanders, who had formed part of the left wing



[Canadian War Records.]

FIXING BAYONETS.





[Canadian War Records.]

## "OVER THE TOP."

of the central attack, rushed back to the headquarters of his battalion. It was evident from his appearance that he had been through heavy fighting. His gas mask and his uniform were torn by bullets. He declared that he had 50 men on the top of the Ridge who commanded the entire position and who were waiting there for reinforcements. These reinforcements could come up over the dead part of the hill. The party of Camerons on the left had not been all killed. When they passed the concrete blockhouses at the beginning of the fighting they came on two half-completed German strong points on the very edge of the spur. They captured these. There were now 20 men left with one machine-gun. Lieutenant Shankland came up and got the men together. Some other men joined them with a second machine-gun and another young officer, Lieutenant Galt, reached the top with four men a little to the right. Shankland placed his men in the most advantageous position. He put the machine-guns so that they commanded the points where the Germans were likely to advance. He placed his men in sheltered points where they could pick out any of the enemy approaching.

The position seemed desperate, for the men

were few and alone. Gradually, however, as it became lighter they realized more and more their great advantages. They picked off every German they saw. Here was a case where the rifle was to prove afresh its place as the supreme weapon of the infantryman. The Germans had no idea that the force on the top of the spur was so small. Time after time they counter-attacked. Time after time the rifles of the Camerons shot them down. At every moment the Canadians expected reinforcements. No reinforcements came. Then Shankland, leaving his men alone, rushed down the hill to headquarters. Encouraged by his news the Canadians struck again. Reinforcements hurried up to the top of the spur. A second battalion helped the Ontario men to re-attack Dad Trench. The Mounted Rifles were progressing steadily through Wolf Copse. The fighting went on all day and continued into the night, but in the end the whole of the first day's objective was taken. Lieutenant Shankland was shortly afterwards given the Victoria Cross for his work that day.

There came a pause before the next attack, a pause in which the Germans attempted time after time to counter-attack, while their artillery day and night poured fire, not only on





CONVEYING WOUNDED FROM PASSCHENDAELE.

[Canadian War Records.]

our front, but on the line far behind. Ypres itself was a special target for their shells and aeroplanes. One night a thousand bombs were dropped on the ruins of that town. The artillery attempted to reach even as far back as Poperinghe, which was also continually and heavily bombed. The second stage of the advance was made on October 31, when, after considerable fighting, the Canadians again took all their objectives and went beyond them, making an advance in all, since the beginning, of about 1,200 yards at the widest point. This day's fighting brought the troops right up to the outskirts of Passchendaele village.

The task on this Tuesday was to push beyond the line of Bellevue Spur, Wolf Copse and Dad Trench. The Germans had many concrete block houses, particularly around Michele Spur. These were strongly held. Their artillery fire was so heavy during the night preceding the attack that the Canadians moving out into their jumping-off place, dug themselves into a narrow trench running from shell hole to shell hole. Within five minutes of the British barrage opening the Germans replied with fire greater than anything which had yet gone before. The Ger-

mans had orders to hold their positions to the last man. They endeavoured to do it. The Canadian troops grumbled at first at the mud, but they soon realized that had it not been for the mud there would have been very few survivors. The mud made progress very difficult, but it also smothered many of the German shells which, falling into the deep heavy ooze, did far less damage than had they fallen on solid ground. Had the surface of the earth been firm it is difficult to see how the Canadians could have got forward under such shell fire. The fighting was heavy all along the line, but it was particularly heavy at certain points, notably at Michele Spur, which had to be carried at the point of the bayonet in face of machine-gun fire, and at Crest Farm, where there was another bayonet fight. By 8 o'clock in the morning the whole line of objectives had been taken except a bunch of "pill boxes" facing Coudenberg. These were secured later in the day.

The third blow came on November 6. The 3rd and 4th Divisions, which had so splendidly done their work, had been moved down the line, and the 1st and 2nd had taken their place. The Germans had sent strong reinforcements, and their artillery gained every



day in strength. The position of the Canadians was now rendered more difficult by the fact that simultaneous attacks to their right and to their left, part of the Allied advances which had begun on October 30, had failed. The Canadians in pushing forward had created a salient where the enemy could attack them on the flanks as well as on front. In the third stage of the advance Passchendaele itself was taken, and then a few days later the first two divisions pushed on, securing a series of strong points all round.

The capture of Passchendaele was the heaviest task that the Canadians had been called upon to do. They were aware that it could only be taken at a very heavy cost of life. The cost was heavy. The number of Canadians killed and wounded at the Battle of Passchendaele was 24,000. It was anticipated earlier in the autumn advance that the capture of this commanding ridge would mean the German evacuation of Northern Belgium. Had Passchendaele been taken when first attacked this might have followed. Unfortunately it was now too late in the year for full results to be obtained from this victory. The winter storms had come, and the country

beyond was practically impassable. In the spring that followed there was no longer possibility of further advance. Passchendaele then had to be abandoned. It is not perhaps surprising that many people in Canada, looking back on the great battle of the Ridges, wondered if it had been worth while. The order to go north and to take the position came to the Canadians unsought. Once it came there was nothing to do but to obey it promptly and loyally. This the Canadians did.

General Currie, in a message to Sir George Perley, summed up the position :

Before we came the situation was uncertain and tactical features had been decided. The Canadians were brought up to do the job, and so far they have done it mighty well. Our success means everything to those who hold the line. The cost has been severe, but I believe the results more than justify the cost.

Among those who fell in the fight there was one whose loss was specially mourned. Major T. M. Papineau, M.C., was a descendant of the famous rebel, and a young man of very distinguished parts. He had been a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, and at the first call of war had joined the Princess Patricia's, and was one of the few survivors of the great fight of the regiment at Ypres in the spring of 1915.



THE MIDDAY RATION WITHIN THE SHELLING AREA.

[Canadian War Records.]



In private life he was a lawyer in Quebec, and it was his hope to lead the Loyalists and Imperialists among French-Canadians. For this task he was peculiarly fitted, both by his intellectual and personal gifts. For a time he was attached to the Staff at Headquarters, but at his own request he went back to his battalion. He felt that the only way in which he could obtain in the end the full confidence of his own people was by keeping in the fighting line. He was killed leading his battalion forward in the Passchendaele fight.

The Canadian Corps having accomplished its job handed over the Passchendaele position to Imperial troops and moved back to the Lens front. The season had now passed when it was possible to make any further advance on Lens. There was nothing to do but to wait during the dreary winter months, to hold the line, and to inflict the maximum of damage on the enemy by raids and by shells.

When the Germans opened their great offensive at Cambrai on March 21, 1918, the Canadian Corps expected that they, too, would be attacked and they had made all ready to receive the enemy and were confident of their

power to resist him. General Currie issued an address to his troops which struck a note that drew a response from the whole Empire.

Under the orders of your devoted officers in the coming battle you will advance or fall where you stand facing the enemy. To those who fall I say: "You will not die, but step into immortality. Your mothers will not lament your fate, but will be proud to have borne such sons. Your names will be revered for ever and ever by your grateful country, and God will take you unto Himself."

Canadians, in this fateful hour I command you and I trust you to fight as you have ever fought, with all your strength, with all your determination, with all your tranquil courage. On many a hard-fought field of battle you have overcome this enemy. With God's help you shall achieve victory once more.

The Germans, however, did not attack the Canadian front, and a few weeks later the Corps was relieved and was given a new position. There came a time of rest for most of the divisions—rest and training in new methods of war to meet the new methods of the enemy.

The Canadian Cavalry Brigade, which was working apart from the Corps, had two opportunities of proving its qualities. On November 20, 1917, when General Byng's army broke the German line at Cambrai, a squadron of Fort



[Canadian official photograph.]

CHURCH BELL OF A VILLAGE NEAR LENS, LEFT BEHIND BY THE GERMANS.



Fort Garry Horse had pushed forward in what was to have been a great cavalry attack. For some reason the main body of the cavalry did not advance. A squadron of the Fort Garry Horse pushed forward through several villages including Mesnières, charged a battery of four light German field guns and wiped it out, and went on two miles inside the enemy territory. They fought their way through a sunken road, came to a German machine-gun battery and killed 50 and fought their way back under machine-gun fire. Lieutenant Gordon Muriel Flowerdew was given the Victoria Cross. The official account of his deed stated :

On reaching the first objective, Lieut. Flowerdew saw two lines of the enemy, each about 60 strong, with machine-guns in the centre and flanks, one line being about 200 yards behind the other. Realizing the critical nature of the operation and how much depended upon it, Lieut. Flowerdew ordered a troop under Lieut. Harvey, V.C., to dismount and carry out a special movement while he led the remaining three troops to the charge. The squadron (less one troop) passed over both lines, killing many of the enemy with the sword ; and wheeling about galloped at them again. Although the squadron had then lost about 70 per cent. of its numbers killed and wounded, from rifle and machine-gun fire directed on it from the front and both flanks, the enemy broke and retired. The survivors of the squadron then established themselves in a position where they were joined, after much hand-to-hand fighting, by Lieut. Harvey's party. Lieut. Flowerdew was dangerously wounded through both thighs during the operation, but continued to cheer on his men. There can be no doubt that this officer's great valour was the prime factor in the capture of the position.

In the spring of 1918 the Canadian Cavalry Brigade was again largely engaged in open fighting that followed the breach through the British lines. It earned the highest praise from all quarters for its splendid activity. Time after time it charged enemy positions and it did very much to help to hold the German advance back during those most critical days. The Cavalry Brigade was under the command of Brigadier-General Seely, formerly British War Minister, until May, 1918. General Seely earned a reputation of his own among the Canadians for cool courage and indifference to danger. In May he retired from the command and was succeeded by Colonel Paterson, of the Fort Garry Horse, who was promoted to Brigadier.

Two secondary branches of Canadian activity cannot be passed over. The Canadians were among the first to realize the full value of railways for the movement of troops in France. Canadian railway organizers strongly urged the British authorities to build fresh lines rather than to depend mainly on motor traffic.

Lord Shaughnessy, President of the Canadian Pacific Railway, equipped and dispatched a railway battalion to France. In time, largely owing to the determined attitude taken by Mr. Lloyd George, who was then War Minister, and to the appointment of Sir Eric Geddes to reorganize the system of communication, the railway men obtained recognition. The Canadians dispatched 10 battalions of railway



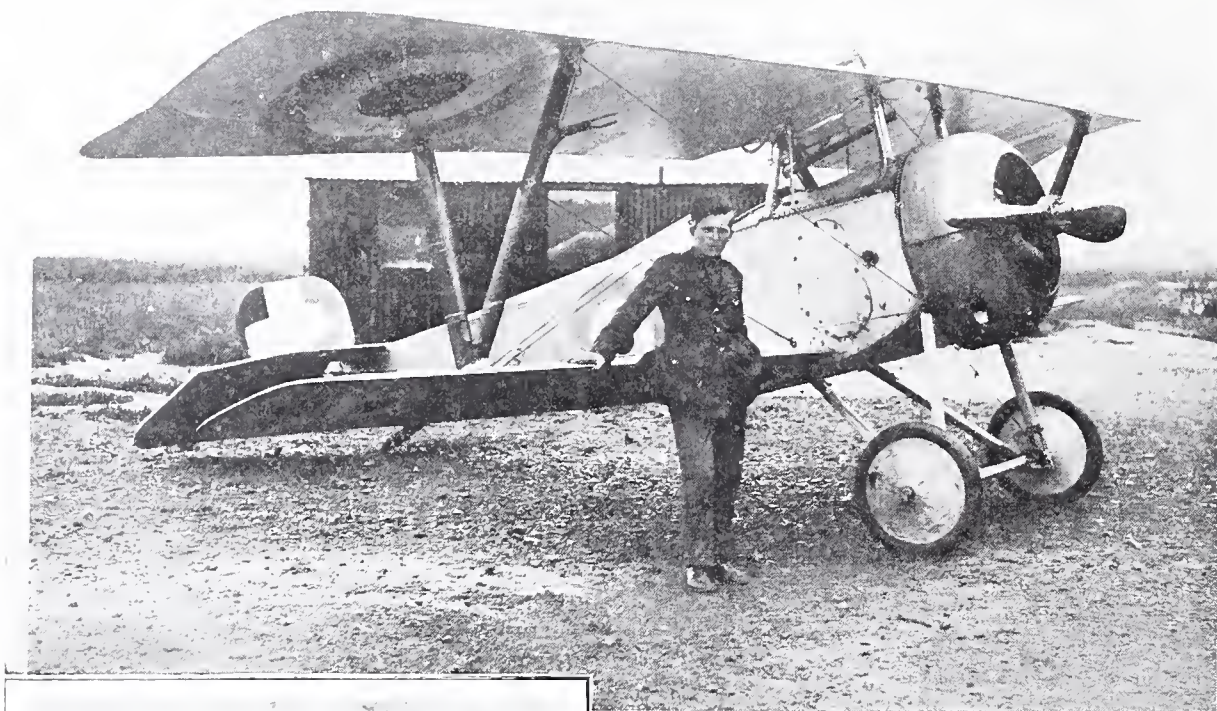
LIEUT. G. M. FLOWERDEW, V.C.

troops, whose great services in the rapid construction of lines under very difficult conditions were universally admitted. It was the boast of the Canadians that they took their light railways up into new territory within a few days of occupation. Mr. Stewart, a noted railway contractor of British Columbia, largely directed these operations, being given the rank of Brigadier-General.

A battalion of the Canadian troops from York County, Ontario, helped during the great retreat of March-April, 1918, to stave off the German advances for five days. They secured 16 machine-guns and two lorries filled with ammunition, and came into position with the 61st Division (British) which had been fighting very heavily. They stationed their machine-guns in and around a small wood about a quarter of a mile north-west of Marcellave under heavy enemy fire, dug themselves in, and held on in face of very heavy enemy attacks.

When England found herself faced by the possibility of a timber famine, owing to the heavy demands for wood at the front and the elimination of the usual imports, an appeal was made to Canada for help. Mr. Alexander Macdougall, a prominent Ontario lumber man,





**CAPT. W. A. BISHOP, V.C., AND HIS MACHINE.**



**SEC.-LIEUT. ALAN McLEOD, V.C.**

organized a battalion for wood-cutting and came to London with it. The battalion grew in time to a Forestry Corps, with 38 battalions and Brigadier-General Macdougall as its chief. The Canadian lumber men built their mills in Windsor Great Park, in the forests of Caithnessshire, amid the giant woods of the Juras, and on the borders of Spain. They cut down forests under shell-fire of the German batteries on the other side of the Cambrai line. The lumber men and railway builders, working as they frequently had to do close to the front, at times suffered considerable casualties.

The Canadians endeavoured to apply business principles to the equipment and provisioning of the Army. General McRae who

before the war had been closely associated with the development of the natural resources of the north-west, was made Quartermaster-General in London, on the reorganization of the English command following the resignation of Sir Sam Hughes in the late autumn of 1916. General McRae introduced, among other things, a system of rationing and feeding the men which was a marked departure from the old traditions. Trained cooks were provided for each battalion, and their work was supervised and inspected from Headquarters. They were not left to their own devices, but were given definite instructions what they were to do and how they were to do it. Menus were prepared for the entire army and had to be strictly observed. The methods of cooking, the quantities used and the kind of food used had all to follow an exact scale. The Canadian dietary system aimed at variety and at the elimination of waste. Fish was largely used. The troops were taught that waste was a crime. Every man was allowed to eat as much as he wanted, provision being not by individual rations, but by units. But while a man could help himself as freely as he liked, he had to eat what he took. A soldier who helped himself to more than he wanted was held to be guilty of a military offence, and disciplinary measures



were used against him. The very grease in washing up was saved and disposed of, being used for the manufacture of explosives. The Canadian system of dietary was widely copied by other Armies, and it was claimed that by it troops were fed in the cheapest and most effective possible fashion.

Canadians from the beginning of the war took a prominent part in the work of both the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service. Large numbers of young Canadians volunteered. The British authorities early came to realize the special adaptability and initiative of the Canadian young man, and a branch of the Flying Service was established in Canada for the recruiting and training of Canadian volunteers. Many of the Canadians attained high honours in the Service. The best known of all was Major Bishop, son of the Registrar of Cork County, Ontario. Major Bishop earned the M.C., D.S.O. with Bar, and on August 13, 1917, the Victoria Cross. Up to the autumn of 1917 he had the destruction of 72 German planes to his credit. He was then sent on training work to Canada, but he returned to the front early in the spring of 1918. Another typical Canadian

airman was Second Lieutenant A. A. McLeod, a lad of eighteen, son of Dr. A. N. McLeod, of Stonewall, Manitoba, who won his decoration because of his conduct during the fighting with eight enemy tri-planes, which dived at him from all directions firing from their front guns. Lieutenant McLeod so successfully handled his machine that his observer was able to shoot three of the enemy tri-planes out of control. The rest of the story is best told in the official record :

By this time Lieut. McLeod had received five wounds and whilst continuing the engagement a bullet penetrated his petrol tank and set the machine on fire.

He then climbed out on to the left bottom plane, controlling his machine from the side of the fuselage, and by side-slipping steeply, kept the flames to one side thus enabling the observer to continue firing until the ground was reached.

The observer had been wounded six times when the machine crashed in No Man's Land, and 2nd Lieut. McLeod, notwithstanding his own wounds, dragged him away from the burning wreckage at great personal risk from heavy machine gun fire from the enemy's lines. This very gallant pilot was again wounded by a bomb whilst engaged in this act of rescue but he persevered until he had placed Lieut. Hammond in comparative safety before falling himself from exhaustion and loss of blood.

In the General Election at the close of 1917 the soldiers and the nurses were given a vote.



CANADIAN FORESTERS AT WORK IN ENGLAND.



*(Canadian official photograph.)*

#### CARRYING WIRE NETTING BY MEANS OF THE "TUMP-LINE."

It was thought in some quarters that the soldiers might vote against the Government as a sign that they were weary of the war. The issue raised in the election was simple. The Union Government, which had brought in conscription, needed the mandate of the people that it might enforce that measure. The Opposition, under Sir Wilfrid Laurier, was against conscription. The Army, as soon as it realized the situation, let its verdict be known with no uncertain voice. The soldier vote went overwhelmingly for the Government and for a firm continuation of the war, the Opposition polling no more than a small percentage of Army votes. The coming of conscription introduced a new feature into the Army. Up to March, 1918, 448,063 had voluntarily enlisted in the Dominion force. Conscription was favoured because it was felt that the burden should fall more equally on all parts and on all classes. When the first conscript troops arrived in England for training in the summer of 1918, they were found to be on examination at least as fine in physique as the average of the volunteers, and they promised to maintain worthily the traditions of their great corps.

The Canadians entered into the war in a spirit of loyalty to the Motherland. They gave their best in men and in service because the possibility of doing otherwise never occurred to them. The splendid fighting qualities of the Canadian troops made them from the Second Battle of Ypres onwards an outstanding section in the Allied Armies. They had behind them the traditions of a great Empire. They were endowed with the virility, the spirit of enterprise, the sense of adventure, and the generous enthusiasm that fittingly belong to a young race. They showed as soon as they settled down to work on the Western front that they were amenable to discipline, and they established in their own ranks a discipline as rigid as that of the Guards. They encouraged enterprise and daring among their rank and file by making quick promotion follow success. Every soldier knew that the Corps Commander himself had once been a private in the ranks in the Canadian Militia. The people of Canada, stricken by their heavy losses, yet felt proud, and justifiably proud, for their sons in France had brought the nation new honour and had proved that they were indeed a people.



## CHAPTER CCXLIII.

# THE RUSSIAN NAVY : 1914-1918.

NAVAL INCIDENTS IN 1914—THE BALTIC IN 1915—RUSSIAN RAID ON MEMEL—GERMANS CAPTURE LIBAU—ADMIRAL VON ESSEN—ACTION OFF OSTERGARN—BRITISH SUBMARINES AT WORK—GERMANS TAKE WINDAU—ATTEMPT ON RIGA—THE MOLTKE—EVENTS OF 1916—GUERRILLA WARFARE—THE RUSSIAN BLACK SEA FLEET—ITS SUCCESSES—THE NAVY AND THE REVOLUTION—CAUSES OF SEDITION—MURDERED OFFICERS—DESTRUCTION OF “MORAL”—GERMAN NAVAL OFFENSIVE IN 1917—RIGA—OESEL—SAILORS’ PART IN THE REVOLUTION—SITUATION IN 1918.

IN earlier chapters some reference was made to the work performed by the Russian Navy in 1914. It was shown in Vol. II., page 23, that one answer to the question why the German High Sea Fleet did not leave the security of its harbours was to be found in the fact that on Germany’s flank was another “fleet in being,” in the shape of the sea forces of Russia, and to have left the Baltic altogether unguarded by sea would have been to invite the landing of Russian troops on the then comparatively defenceless littoral.

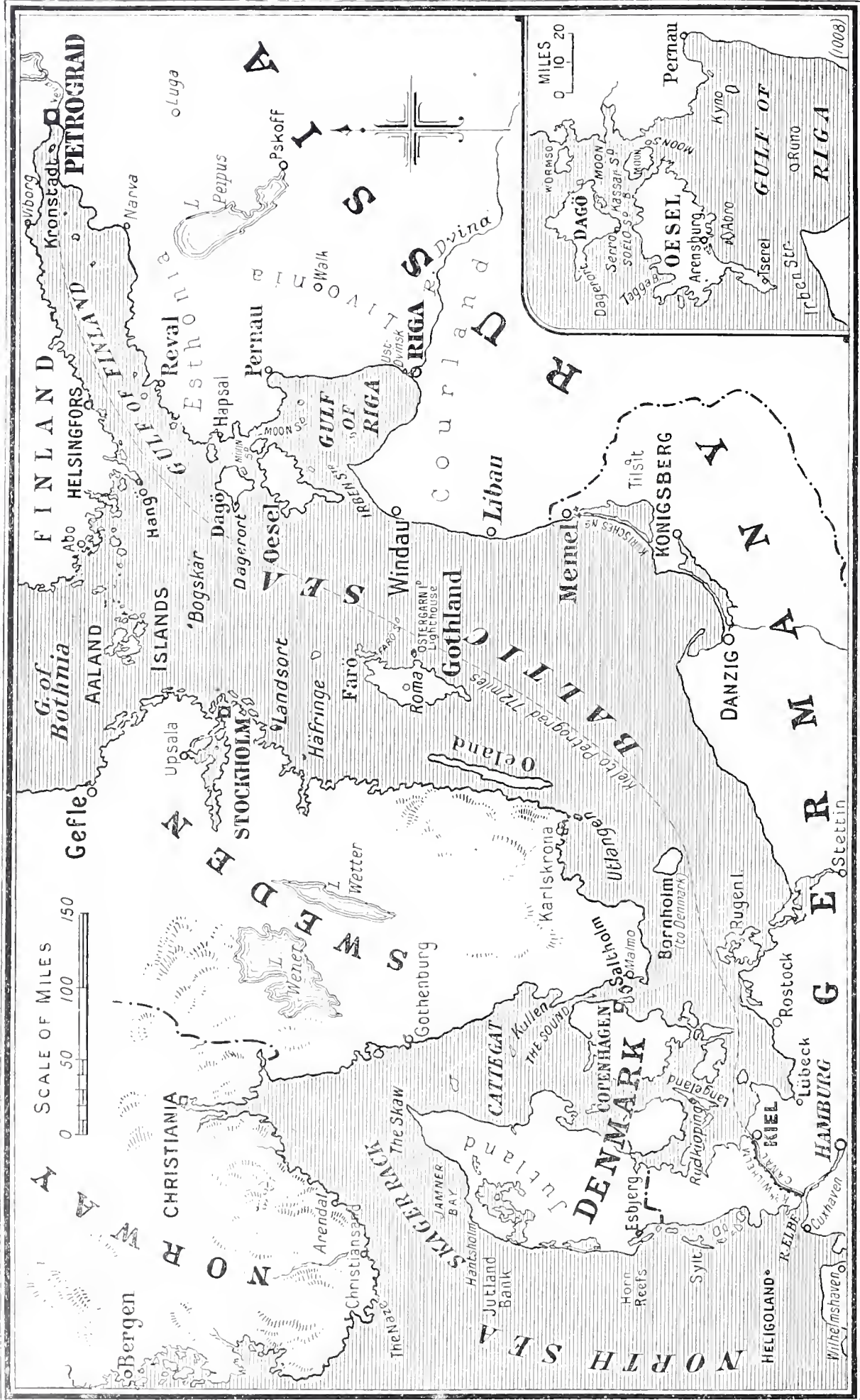
The chief events connected with the Russian Navy in 1914 were the loss of the cruiser *Pallada* by torpedo attack on October 11, and a few successful demonstrations by the ships under Admiral von Essen. As early as August, 1914, the Russians sank the light cruiser *Magdeburg* off Odensholm after she had been stranded on a reef at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, and during the winter months they carried out several mining operations off the German coast. In December, 1914, the German cruiser *Friedrich Karl* and some minor enemy craft were lost or damaged on these mines. The German Fleet confined its activities principally to observing the naval measures adopted by Russia for the defence of her coasts, such as minelaying.

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Occasionally the Germans indulged in futile bombardments, such as the shelling of Libau by the *Augsburg* on August 2; the bombardment of lighthouses at *Dagerort* and *Bogskär*, among others; and similar acts of maritime “hooliganism,” as *The Times* Correspondent at Petrograd called them. In these early months the Russian seamen gained valuable experience of the new weapons of war. They were able to avoid or frustrate all but one of the twenty or so attacks delivered by the German submarines, and more than held their own in the skirmishes between the lighter forces. The feeling entertained for the Russian seamen by their confrères in the British Fleet was happily expressed by Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, as he then was, in a speech on board his flagship to a party of Russian journalists who visited him at the end of February, 1916. “The Russian Navy,” he said, “has won our admiration by its progress and efficiency. Nothing could give us greater pleasure than to be able to fight side by side with the Russian sailors against our common foe. It would be difficult for us to go to the Baltic, but I will not say impossible. I hope the day may come when our ships will engage the enemy together.”

At the beginning of 1915 practically all the Russian naval forces in the Baltic were, of



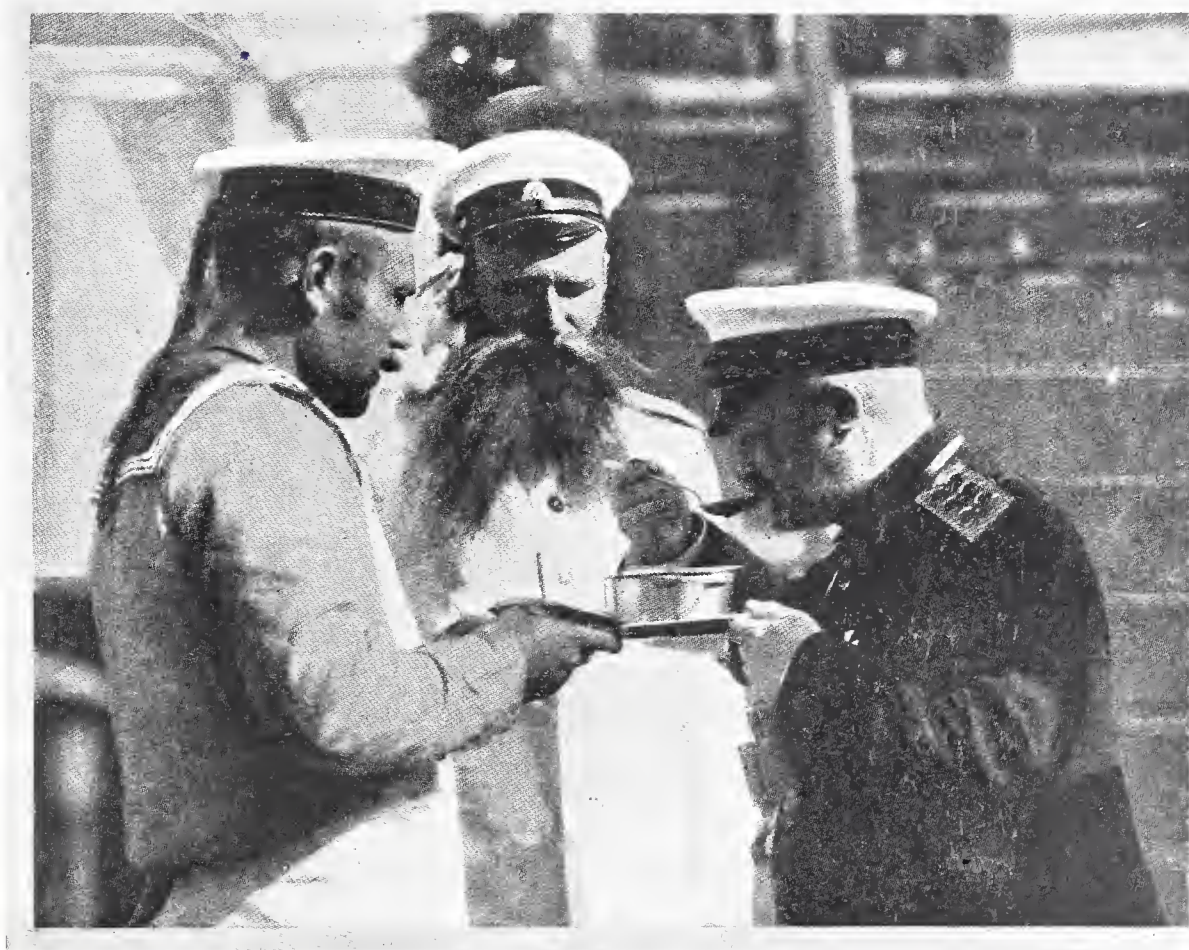


THE BALTIC SEA AND RUSSIAN GULFS.



course, confined to their bases on account of the ice, which also prevented the enemy from undertaking an offensive movement in the Gulfs of Riga, Finland, or Bothnia. The Russian Admiralty utilized this time of waiting to strengthen their defences at the entrances of the Gulfs, and in this connexion their endeavours were favoured by the strategical conformation of the theatre in which the

to hold its own on the defensive. It had to do something more. The covering of Petrograd and of the right flank of the Russian Armies was not all that was required of the forces under Admiral von Essen.\* Beyond the bays of the Baltic, on the expanse of the North Sea, there was expected to develop the great and decisive conflict of the most powerful rivals at sea in the world's history—that between the



**ADMIRAL VON ESSEN (Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Baltic Fleet in 1914) OFFICIALLY TASTING THE SAILORS' SOUP.**

future naval operations were expected to develop. These preparations, aided by the scientific appliances which modern invention had placed at their disposal, compensated in some measure for the superiority in *matériel* of the German forces. Thus the Russian seamen could look forward to the strong attempt which the enemy was certain to undertake in the spring of 1915 in the direction of Riga and of Petrograd with confidence in their ability to withstand this shock.

The Russian authorities, however, well realized the fact that their Fleet would not fulfil the task which, in view of the general strategical position of the Allies, it was called upon to perform merely by proving its ability

German High Sea Fleet and the Grand Fleet of Great Britain. Upon the position in the North Sea, the main naval theatre of the war, the whole of the Allied cause depended. To divert from the North Sea to the Baltic as much as possible of the German naval forces action of an offensive character was required. It was true that owing to the superiority of the enemy forces energetic and spirited demonstrations, rather than actions of a decisive character, had to suffice, but even these would not have been possible without preparedness to accept battle. This was the policy of the naval authorities, so to organize and pursue their battle preparations that the Fleet would

\* See Vol. VII., p. 148.



be ready for any eventuality. Much work was done throughout the winter of 1914-15 on board the vessels in regard to exercises and training. In the shipyards, too, new warships were hastened towards completion, and special energy was devoted to the provision of new submarines, which in the conditions then unfolding were likely to play a prominent part in the operations in the Baltic.

On March 18, 1915, the Russians gave evidence of their alertness and efficiency by effecting a dramatic *coup* at the expense of the

tachment which carried out a reconnaissance towards Memel has fallen back on our territory."

This dash, apart from its military value as a reconnaissance, was important from a naval standpoint, since the Russians could not have carried it out had the enemy made good use of his naval superiority. Either the Germans were caught napping or had undervalued the menace from the north. The *coup* at any rate had an excellent effect on the *moral* of the Russian seamen.



From a German photograph.

#### LIBAU.

German troops encamped in the Harbour Square.

Germans along the East Prussian coast. Covered by the Fleet, a raid was made by Russian troops on Memel, the town being captured.\* It was defended on the water side by two forts, one near the town, but dominated by high lands in the neighbourhood, the other at the end of the Kurische Nehrung, the narrow strip of dune which protects the town from the sea and the Baltic storms. Not only did it possess iron foundries and chemical works, with large stores of timber, but in its shipyards naval construction was proceeding. The Russians remained in possession for three days and on March 23 the Petrograd official *communiqué* announced that "Our de-

The Germans next turned their attention towards the capture of Libau, a necessary preliminary to the operations they had planned to execute later against Riga. Libau was not, as freely asserted in the German Press, a naval and land fortress. It had been an unfortified place since 1910, when it was completely dismantled and became an ordinary open maritime town. At the same time, Russian submarines had used the port as a base—an additional reason why its capture was desired by the Germans. During the winter they had reconnoitred the district with the assistance of their aircraft, and on one occasion a dirigible airship of the Parseval type, No. 19, was shot down by the Russians. In April some mining

\* See Vol. VII., p. 150.



craft were sent out to lay a field of these machines opposite the coast off which operations were to be carried out. In this way the movement was secured from molestation from the seaward side. Patrols were also set to watch carefully the exits from the Baltic gulfs. At length, on May 9, the Russian Headquarters Staff made the announcement that on the previous evening "the enemy troops, taking the offensive, supported by their fleet along the littoral, occupied Libau after a fight with a small detachment of our Territorial Force." The Russian cruisers had been set to keep watch in the southern portion of the Baltic for any transports directed against Libau, but the place fell to the land advance. No movement of troops overseas was ventured upon. The Russian cruisers merely exchanged a few shots with the German torpedo boats on patrol duties, but, as it was afterwards proved, at the same time that this firing was taking place the German troops were entering the town.

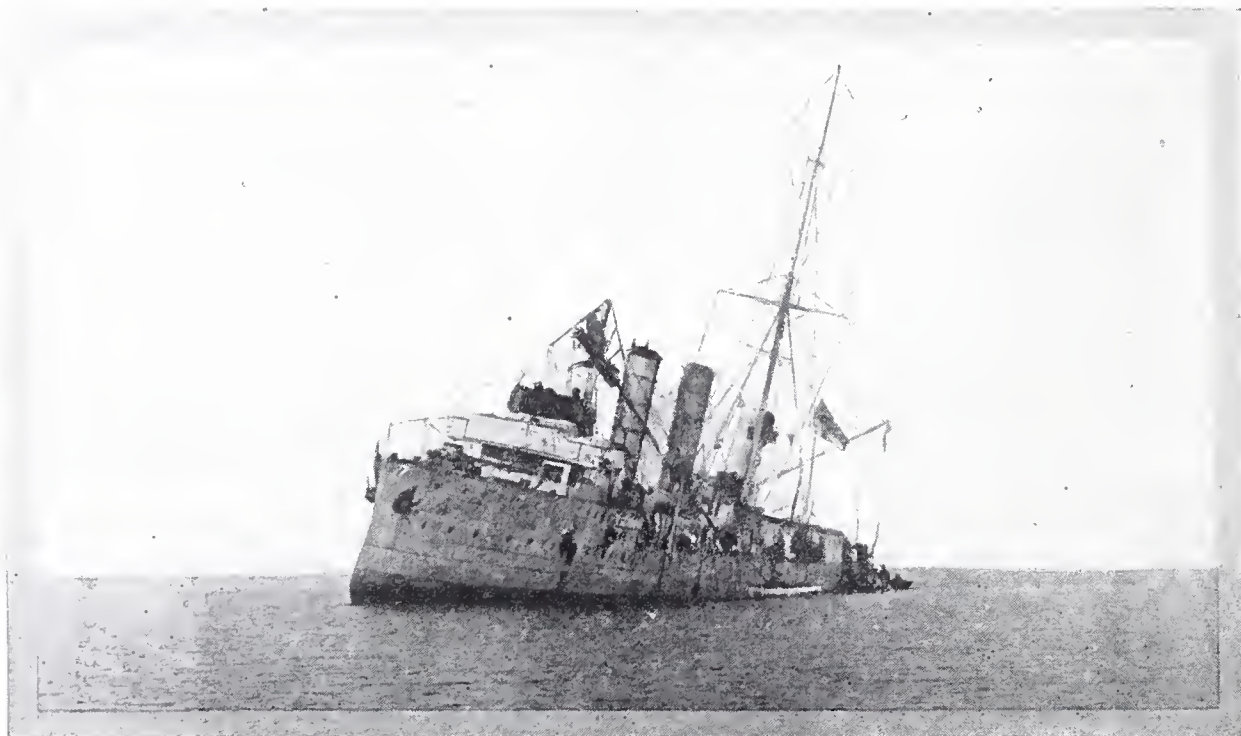
Before the next important movement by sea in the Baltic the Russian Navy sustained a severe loss by the death of its capable and distinguished Commander-in-Chief in that sea, Admiral von Essen, who died in hospital at Reval, of pneumonia. Born in 1860, he became famous during the war with Japan by his achievements as captain of the little cruiser *Novik*. During the ten months in which he was Commander-in-Chief under war conditions he gained to the full the confidence of all his officers and men and of the country in general by his genius as an organizer and leader. An officer of the Russian Navy has supplied for this chapter the following note upon Admiral von Essen and his successor, Admiral Kanin: "The school of Admiral Essen had done much to improve the Russian Navy since 1905. It was a hard military school, based on strict discipline, and aiming at a high degree of technical efficiency, but not prepared to deal with political and social difficulties. The strong personality of Essen himself—his iron will and genuine enthusiasm—supported by courts-martial and severe punishment, kept things going well as long as the Admiral was at the head of the Baltic Fleet. Active operations helped to maintain the spirit of the Russian Navy, in spite of unfavourable conditions. Essen's successor, Admiral Kanin, was an able officer, but a weak character, lacking enthusiasm and inspiration."

Within a few weeks of the occupation of Libau, the ice in the Baltic having broken, the Germans were able to operate to the northward. On June 5, 1915, it was announced in the Russian official *communiqué* that large German naval forces had been revealed in the Middle Baltic, the Russian ships there having exchanged shots with the Germans in the vicinity of the Gulf of Riga. Similarly, on June 6, it was officially stated from Petrograd that the look-out stations on the coast and the Russian submarines doing scouting duties had reported enemy activity near the coast on June 3, especially at the entrance to the Riga Gulf. German torpedo boats, preceding larger vessels, approached the gulf, but retired on sighting the Russian forces. Soon afterwards the Germans continued their reconnoitring by means of aeroplanes, which dropped bombs on the Russian vessels, without causing any damage. Another movement of this kind was attempted on June 6, when the Russian submarines attacked with good effect, the enemy falling back. At the same time the Russians lost the transport or mine-layer *Yenissei*, a vessel of 2,926 tons, built at the Baltic Works in 1906. Of her complement of about 300, 32 men were saved. The *Yenissei* and her sister ships had, however, managed to lay mines in the track of the enemy, and according to reports from the Russian coastguards and scouting submarines three of the enemy vessels were thereby sunk or damaged.

While the enemy was actively preparing the captured town of Libau as an advanced base for further operations, his sea forces were daily reconnoitring the strength and disposition of the Russian ships. On June 28 and 29, possibly to test the strength of the shore defences, a German squadron bombarded Windau. It was thought that a landing was contemplated, but in any case a spirited torpedo attack delivered by the Russians obliged the enemy to retire. One of the German mine-sweepers was struck by one of these machines and blown up.

Three days later there occurred a cruiser and destroyer action which was decidedly successful for the Russians. This was on July 2, 1915, and took place in the latitude of the Ostergarn lighthouse, on the eastern shore of the island of Gotland. The Russian cruisers *Rurik*, *Makaroff*, *Bayan*, *Bogatyr*, and *Oleg* met and attacked the German cruiser *Augsburg*, the minelayer *Albatross*, and three





THE ALBATROSS ASHORE AT OSTERGARN.

destroyers, which had been detached from the German Baltic Squadron. The Augsburg at once made off, and, thanks to her speed of  $25\frac{1}{2}$  knots, was able to make good her escape. The German destroyers, however, to their credit be it said, remained to do what they could to cover their unfortunate consort, the Albatross, a vessel somewhat similar to the Russian Yenissei, being of 2,165 tons displacement, and launched at Bremen in 1907. The Albatross, having suffered severely, was obliged to run ashore near the hamlet of Ostergarn. Her foremast was knocked over, both funnels were blown away, and she had 25 holes through the hull. The captain, recognizing the impossibility of putting to sea within the 24 hours prescribed by international law, lowered his flag, and the ship was placed under a guard of officers, while the crew were confined by the Swedish authorities. There were 27 killed, some of whom, including First Lieutenant Löwenberg, were buried in the little churchyard of Ostergarn, while the 33 wounded were removed to the hospital at Roma. The fact that the Russians continued to shell the Albatross while aground, and that some of their shells flew over the island of Ostergarn, was the subject of diplomatic correspondence between the Russian and Swedish Governments, and the Russian reply was received in Stockholm as quite satisfactory.

The Augsburg having raised the alarm,

German reinforcements were hastily dispatched to the scene of action. The armoured cruiser Roon, a light cruiser of the Bremen type, and several submarines proceeded to attack the Russian cruisers, but without success. Indeed, in a fight with the Rurik, which concentrated her fire on the Roon, that German vessel suffered severe damage, and was compelled to withdraw. Similarly, the Russian destroyers were successful in an encounter with the enemy submarines, one of which was reported to have been sunk by the destroyer Vnimatelny, accompanying the Rurik. But perhaps most striking of all was the intervention of British submarines.\* It was not known until that date that any of these boats had penetrated into the Baltic. At 3 p.m. on the afternoon of July 2, however, a submarine under the command of Commander Max K. Horton successfully attacked a German battleship of the Pommern type, which was leading a line of battleships to the assistance of the forces previously mentioned. Contrary to a statement of Dr. Macnamara in the House of Commons, a semi-official statement from Berlin denied that a German warship was sunk in the Baltic by a hostile submarine. The vessel was undoubtedly torpedoed, however, and later in the month the Tsar conferred the Order of St. George (Fourth Class) upon Commander Horton and the Cross of St. George upon his crew. On July 24, 1915, the Albatross

\* See Vol. VII., p. 148.



was refloated, and interned by the Swedish authorities at Farö Sound. According to the Berlin Wireless, this unfortunate vessel lost touch with her consorts owing to a dense fog, and, being suddenly attacked by four large ships, fought desperately "for several hours," being slowly driven towards the Swedish coast. After running his ship aground, the captain assembled the crew around the flag flying aft, the National Anthem was sung, and three cheers given for the Emperor and the Fatherland. The captain then struck his flag and requested the Swedes to intern the crew.

Shortly afterwards the general advance of the German armies resulted in the occupation of Windau. Having thus secured their position on the Baltic side of Courland, the Germans gained a favourable base for further operations against the Bay of Riga, the occupation of which was of special importance to them. As long as the Russian Fleet was operating in Riga Bay it was extraordinarily difficult for the German troops to hold the shore, as the ships covered the operations of the Russian Armies and protected the flank of the troops. It was the German aim to reverse this position, and by gaining possession of the Gulf of Riga to enable their line resting on the sea to be advanced.

The campaign for the capture of Riga Bay began early in August, 1915. It was evidently delayed somewhat by the activity of the Russo-British submarines and mining craft. On July 30, for instance, a large German

transport was sunk by a British submarine commanded by Commander Noel F. Laurence, and this event was significant in connexion with the contemplated military operations in the Courland coast sector, as the vessel contained reserves which were being sent to Libau to reinforce the army of General von Below.



A DERELICT GERMAN MINE.

Aircraft were also active about this time. On August 4 the Russian official *communiqué* announced that their seaplanes had attacked a German gunboat near Windau and forced it to run ashore. The same seaplanes also beat off a Zeppelin which was reconnoitring in company with two German seaplanes, one of which was driven down. The first determined attack on Riga Bay approaches was on



THE RUSSIAN CRUISER RURIK.



August 8, 1915. On this date nine German battleships, 12 cruisers, and a large number of destroyers approached the Irben Channel, the narrow strait between Courland and the island of Oesel which gives access to the Gulf itself. The Germans achieved no success in this operation, and a day or two later declared that it was intended to be "only a reconnaissance for the purpose of ascertaining the position of the Russian mines, in the course of which two small minesweepers were lost." Two days after this reconnaissance in force large German forces approached simultaneously the entrance to the Gulf and the Åland Skerries, bombarding the lighthouses. Russian warships and the shore batteries engaged the enemy, and submarines were also active in the defence, the result being that the Germans again withdrew. Outpost fighting between torpedo craft was again reported on August 12.

All this preliminary work culminated in a grand attack during the week which ended on Saturday, August 21, 1915.\* The result of this was that the Germans sustained a severe rebuff, being driven out of the Gulf with loss. British submarines co-operating with the Russians also participated by torpedoing the

battle-cruiser Moltke. The following official Russian account was issued by the Naval Headquarters Staff on Monday, August 23 :—

On August 16 the German Fleet, in strong force, recommenced the attack against our position at the entrance of the Gulf of Riga. Our ships on August 16 and 17 repulsed the enemy, and impeded their secret operations for preparing to break through the entrance of the Gulf. The Germans were helped by the foggy weather. On August 18, aided by a thick fog, considerable German forces succeeded in entering the Gulf. Our ships strenuously resisted, and retired without losing touch with the enemy. On August 19 and 20 the Germans made reconnaissances in the Gulf in various directions, during which a series of fights with the Russian Fleet took place. In the result the German Fleet suffered considerable losses among the torpedo-boats.

We lost the Sivoutch, a gunboat, which perished gloriously in unequal combat with a cruiser which, on the evening of August 19, assisted by torpedo-boats, attacked her, firing on her at a distance of 1,500 yards. The Sivoutch, in flames, and with her decks red-hot, continued firing until she went down, sinking a German torpedo-boat as she sank beneath the water. The guns of the Sivoutch continued to fire until she was totally submerged.

On August 21 the enemy, in consequence of the losses uselessly incurred, apparently cleared out of the Gulf.

Between August 16 and 19 we damaged or sank two cruisers and no fewer than eight torpedo-boats. At the same time our gallant allies torpedoed in the Baltic one of the Dreadnoughts of the German fleet.

An official *communiqué* issued in Berlin by the German Naval Staff gave the following account of the fighting :—

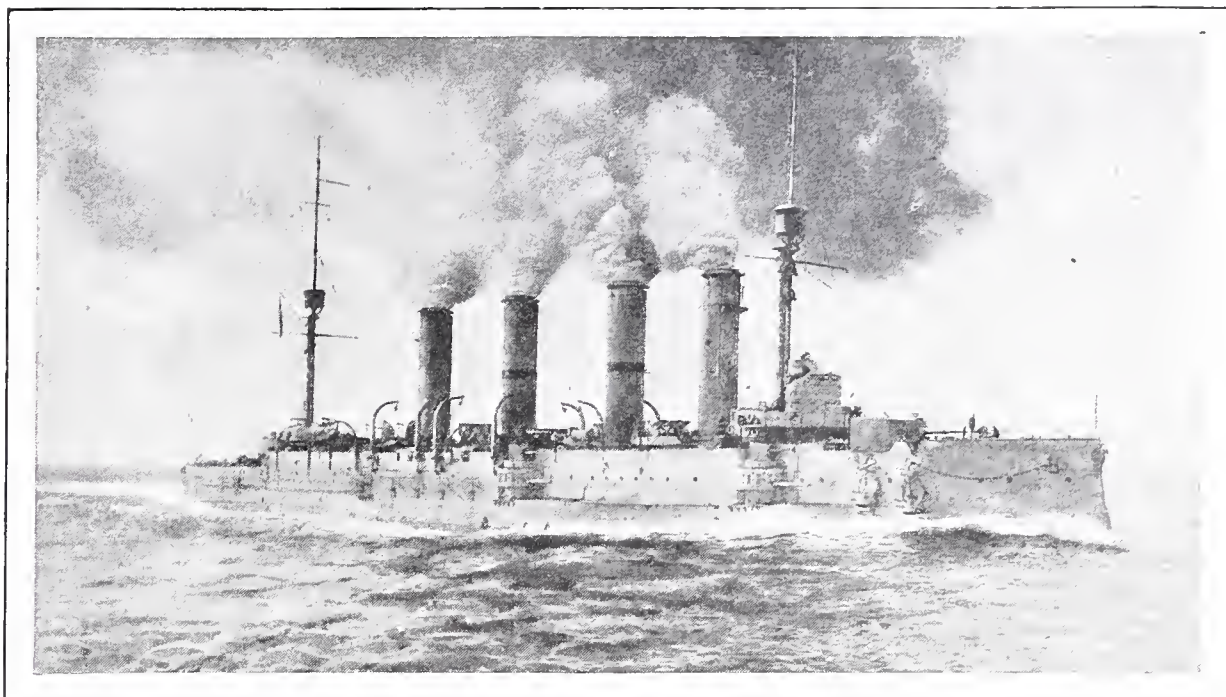
Our Baltic naval forces penetrated the Gulf of Riga,

\* See Vol. VII., p. 151.



THE RUSSIAN CRUISER MAKAROFF.





THE RUSSIAN CRUISER BAYAN.

after several days' difficult mine sweeping and clearing away net obstructions had opened a way into the Gulf. In outpost engagements which developed upon our entrance into the Gulf a Russian torpedo-boat of the Emir Bucharsky class was destroyed. Other torpedo boats, among them the Novik, and also a large vessel, were heavily damaged. In the course of a retreat, on the evening of August 19, in Moon Sund, the Russian gunboats Sivoutch and Koreëts were sunk, after brave fighting, by artillery fire and attacks by torpedo-boats. Forty men of the crews, among them two officers, severely wounded, were rescued by our torpedo-boats. Three of our torpedo-boats were damaged by mines. One of them sank, one was able to run ashore, and one was escorted to port. Our loss of life was small.

Some misapprehension concerning a reported attempt at landing was caused by a statement of the President of the Duma on August 22 to the effect that the Germans tried to make a descent near Pernau, in the north-east corner of the Gulf, with four barges full of troops, all of which were sunk. A statement of the Commandant of the fortress at Reval on September 5 showed that this incident was much exaggerated. The Commandant stated that, in order to allay the apprehension caused among the inhabitants of Reval, he appealed to their good sense to judge for themselves what damage threatened the town by the fact that two small enemy boats, with three empty steamers, profited by the fog to approach Pernau, where they were sunk in the river by the Germans themselves, in order to block the Channel.

There was similar uncertainty, moreover, regarding the torpedo attack on the Moltke. Early reports said that this important vessel had sunk as a result of the attack which was

delivered on August 19 by the British submarine E1, Commander Noel F. Laurence. But, though the vessel was hit, she was brought to Kiel in a damaged condition, being seen by Scandinavian fishermen to be proceeding slowly towards that port, accompanied by several lighters. Commander Laurence received the Fourth Class of the Order of St. George for this achievement and for sinking on July 30 the transport already referred to. His crew also received the Cross of the same Order. These British submarines, said Mr. Balfour on September 30, were not an independent force, but, were acting under the orders of the Russian Admiral. Shortly after the torpedoing of the Moltke, the cruiser Prinz Adalbert was sunk by a British submarine, on October 23, 1915. The event occurred off Libau, and nearly all the crew, including Captain Wilhelm Bunnemann, went down with the vessel. The disturbing effect on the German mind of the successes of the British submarines in the Baltic was indicated by the following telegram which Mr. Karl von Wiegand sent to the *New York World* by the German Wireless Service. Though ostensibly a private dispatch to an American journal, it was significant that this was circulated officially by the German authorities. It said :—

According to my information the sinking of the Prinz Adalbert occurred during the daytime. The cruiser was steaming in hazy weather when she was struck by two torpedoes almost simultaneously. The warship seemed to go into the air by an internal explosion in the magazine or boilers, which followed instantly,





THE RUSSIAN CRUISER OLEG.

and she disappeared beneath the waters of the Baltic immediately, like a piece of iron. The exact number of drowned, which is, however, believed to be small, has not yet been reported. [The German Naval Staff reported that only a few men were saved.]

The Prinz Adalbert belongs to the older type of cruisers built in 1901, had few of the safeguarding devices against torpedoes, and not anything like the heavy watertight bulkhead or cell system of the Moltke type. All reports agree that she went up into the air as if rent in twain, and sank in a few moments. Survivors say that they saw the pathway of two torpedoes cutting the water almost side by side, from which it is assumed that the English submarine was equipped with the new double torpedo-tube system which the latest English models are said to have. The Prinz Adalbert is the first German cruiser sunk by an English torpedo, and the third German warship so sunk.

The enemy submarines in the Baltic offer a difficult problem. The Admiralty is confronted with the practically impossible task of keeping them out. The Admiralty can mine or set barrier nets in the Sound between Denmark and Sweden only up to the three-mile limit, where the neutral waters of the two countries begin. The problem is causing the Admiralty serious thought. Against this the English are enabled to mine and set barrier nets across the Channel from shore to shore, which they have done, because of France being her Ally. There is no neutral stretch of water through which German submarines can slip. Full details of the Prinz Adalbert have not yet been received.

One unfortunate episode connected with British submarine operations in the Baltic was the loss of "E. 13" by stranding on the island of Saltholm, in the Sound, early on the morning of August 19, 1915. While aground, a German destroyer attacked the submarine, and Commander Geoffrey Layton, seeing that resistance was useless, ordered the abandonment of the boat. While in the water the crew were shelled by the destroyer's

guns, until a Danish torpedo boat lowered her boats and steamed between the submarine and the Germans, thus preventing further murders. Fifteen of the 30 officers and men in "E. 13" were killed, and their bodies were conveyed to England in a Danish vessel kindly detailed for the purpose by the Government of Denmark. "E. 13" was refloated and interned on September 3.

Besides operating against the German Navy, our submarines also cooperated with the Russian flotillas in a commercial blockade in the Baltic. Their efforts created a condition of paralysis in the traffic in minerals from Scandinavian ports. On October 15, for instance, it was reported that 37 out of 50 steamers engaged in this traffic were held up in Swedish ports. A typical picture of this submarine activity was afforded when the British Foreign Office, in order to correct German misstatements on the matter, issued the following statement on December 1, 1915:—

The German "wireless" communication of November 11 contained a report that the German steamship Germania was blown up by a dynamite bomb placed on board her by a British submarine. In view of this assertion his Majesty's Government consider it well to put on record a true account of what took place.

The commanding officer of the British submarine states that at noon on October 11, when between Utlangen and the south of Gotland, he sighted the Germania and signalled to her to stop. The Germania was heading for the Swedish coast, and, disregarding the signal to stop, continued to steam in that direction. Shots were fired by the submarine in order to bring the vessel to, and also to warn her that she was running on



a sand-bank. The *Germania* paid no attention to these signals, and ran ashore between Landbrink and the Outer Stengrund.

The submarine, which had hitherto remained outside Swedish territorial waters, then proceeded alongside with the object of saving the crew and helping to save the ship, but the latter was found to be abandoned. An hour was spent in an attempt to steam and tow her off, but it was found impossible to move her. As water was by that time gaining in the engine-room, the British officer and men returned to the submarine, taking with them the ship's papers for safe custody and removing a quantity of fresh meat for the use of the submarine's crew.

The explosion referred to in the German "wireless" message, which is alleged to have taken place after the British sailors left the *Germania*, would appear to have been the result of sea water coming into contact with the boilers. It certainly was not due to any attempt on the part of the British sailors to destroy the vessel.

The vessel was bound for Stettin with a cargo of 2,750 tons of concentrated iron ore.

In addition to Commanders Max Horton and Noel Laurence, the Russian authorities also conferred decorations upon Commander F. A. N. Cromie, commanding a submarine in the Baltic. It was this officer's boat which sank the German cruiser *Undine* on November 7 off the south coast of Sweden. She was reported to be convoying the German steam-ferry *Preussen*, which had a cargo of loaded railway trucks. Struck by two torpedoes, the *Undine* sank within a few minutes, but a torpedo boat rescued most of her crew. Com-

mander Cromie gave a racy account of his experiences about this time in a letter published in the Press on December 14, 1915, in which he said :—

The Tsar came to inspect the fortifications and the submarines. I had a very pleasant surprise in being decorated by him with the St. George's Cross—the Russian V.C., and the best war Order they have, and five men of my boat got the silver cross. So we have not done so badly in our two months out here. We did another 1,500 miles this last trip. I went to bed for the first two days out with "flu," and so directed operations from my bunk. We met a German submarine and had to dive in a hurry, and found ourselves down at 140 ft. before I could get out of bed to take charge. The third day we found a lot of "wood" outside neutral waters, and after a short chase we made a lovely bonfire, being unable to sink the stuff. The "inhabitants" left hurriedly.

Nothing travels by daylight since our last raid on the "hen run," so my special haunt was very dull, and I gave it up after four days and tried another spot, where I knew train ferries must pass. We had an exciting chase, but it was spoilt by two destroyers and a cruiser turning up. Guessing that they would come back again I lay low, and sure enough I caught the *Undine* in the afternoon. The first shot stopped her and put her on fire, but she was not going down quickly enough; so, avoiding the destroyer that was after us, I dived under the *Undine*'s stern and gave her another from the other side. It was a very fine sight, and made one feel that one did not care a — for the destroyers firing at one all the time. . . . We arrived in covered with ice, of which I will send a photo.

The Emperor said our work in the — had made all the difference to the country. In the evening we "dined with all the Kings and Princes," etc., in the



THE RUSSIAN CRUISER BOGATYR.



train, which was a palatial affair. We sat down 28 at one table and still left room for waiting. Nearly all spoke English, and said all sorts of nice polite things, and I sneaked a menu card as a souvenir, but had not the cheek to ask for signatures.

It was a very hard frost during the Emperor's inspection, and all were very much surprised to see us without great coats, but the cold is so dry here that one does not feel it so long as one moves about. The place is lovely under snow, and sledging is very pleasant with all the bells going. Unfortunately it has now all gone and is raining hard.

The German cruiser *Bremen* was another victim of a British submarine, on December 17, 1915. In admitting the destruction of this vessel, the Germans stated that she was sunk in the Eastern Baltic, and that a considerable proportion of the crew was saved. A torpedo boat was sunk at the same time. The Germans were also reported to have lost on December 17 the patrol boat *Bunz* by a mine, off Rudkio-ping, on the island of Langeland. Danish gunboats picked up some bodies of the crew of this vessel.

It is not necessary in this chapter to follow in any greater detail the work of the British submarines in the Baltic. Reference may be made in passing to the termination of their work when the Russians made "peace" with Germany. According to an Admiralty *communiqué* dated May 16, 1918, the seven submarines of the British Navy which remained in Russian waters were destroyed by order during the period April 3-8, 1918, upon the approach of German naval forces and transports to Hangö (South-West Finland). None of the ships fell into enemy hands.

"The guns at and near Hangö had already been dismantled, and upon the appearance of the German forces the Russians retreated from the vicinity, after blowing up their four American submarines.

"Four British submarines of class E were taken outside the harbour of Helsingfors on April 3 and blown up and sunk. Three 'C' boats were demolished between that day and April 8. Their crews were duly removed to Petrograd.

"The project of blocking the harbour by sinking ships in it had been rejected by the Russian Admiral Commanding-in-Chief. The effect of the destruction of the British submarines upon the crews of the merchant vessels was, however, excellent, and induced the destruction of many ships which would otherwise have fallen into the hands of the enemy.

"Of the submarines mentioned above, two

'E' boats had been employed in the Baltic since October 15, 1914; E — and E — had left England on August 15, 1915; and E — and E — (the former subsequently lost on service) had sailed on September 4, 1915. All these boats had made their way to their destination through the Skaw and the Sound.

"The remainder (four 'C' boats) had been towed to Archangel, leaving England on August 1, 1916, floated at the latter port on to lighters, and removed to Kronstadt by inland water transport. They were unloaded at Kronstadt on September 19, and returned to the Baltic shipbuilding works at Petrograd the following day. C — ran ashore in the Gulf of Riga on October 28, 1917, and, it having been found impossible to refloat her, she was blown up by her crew, which reached Pernaú in safety."

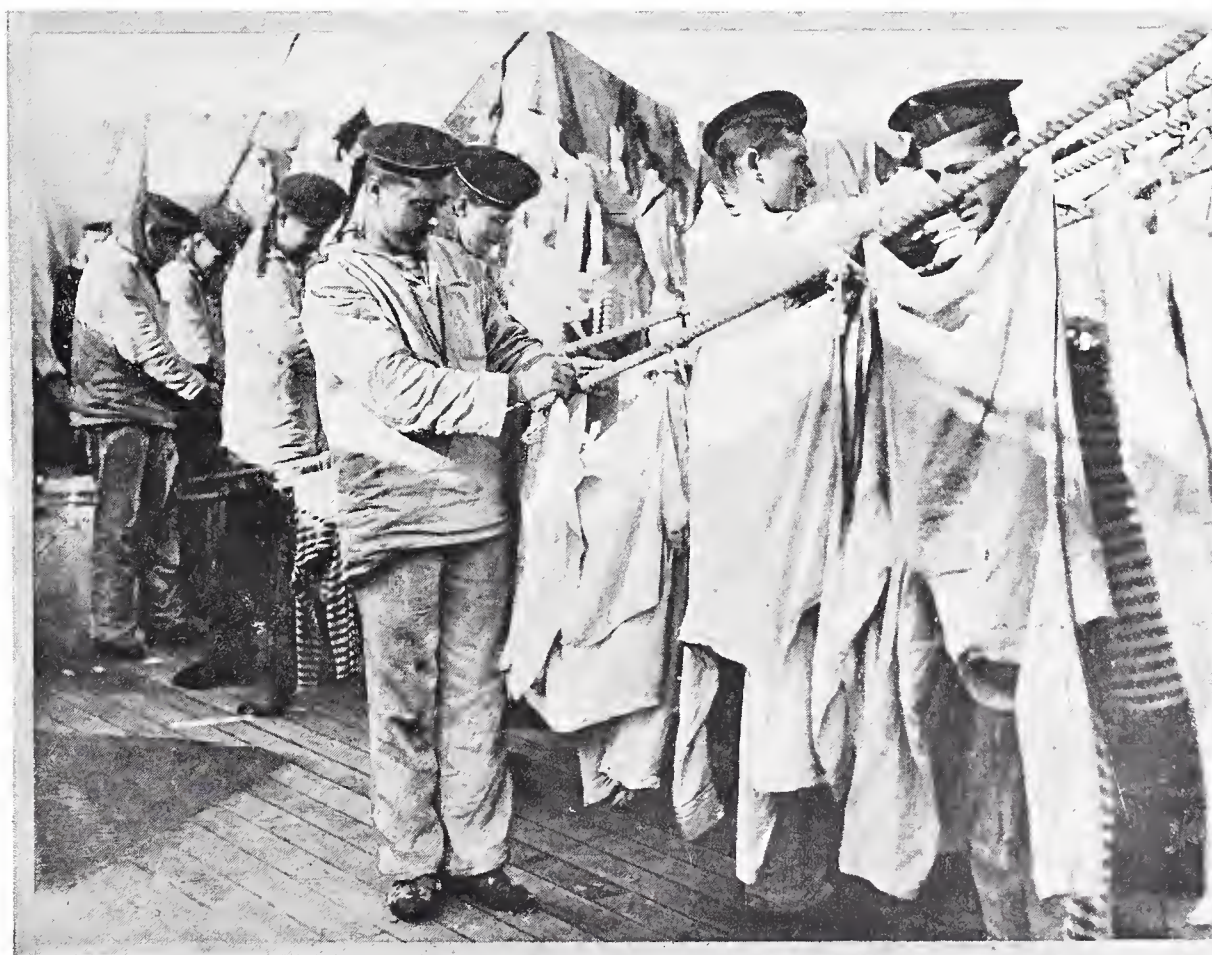
A Russian naval officer well acquainted with the conditions under which the submarines operated supplies the following commentary upon their work:—"The rôle of the British submarines in delaying the German offensive at a time critical for the Russian Navy has been undoubtedly as important as their example of discipline and devotion to duty during a very difficult time."

Having withdrawn from the Gulf of Riga after their set-back in the latter part of August, 1915, the Germans, in view of the approaching winter, and also of the fact that the advance of their land forces in the direction of Petrograd had been arrested on the line of the River Dvina, had to renounce any further considerable operations by sea for that year. This fact and the coming of the winter caused a reduction in naval activity in the Baltic. On the whole, 1915 was a most successful year for the Russian Fleet in that sea. The valuable training of Admiral von Essen bore its expected fruit, and the prestige of the officers and men stood higher than it had done for many years. The arduous and difficult operations around the Gulf of Riga were well planned and skillfully executed. They had reinforced the confidence of the Russian seamen in their preparedness for any future action, and in their ability to fulfil all the demands which might be made upon them. The year 1916 opened, therefore, with bright prospects from the naval point of view, especially as the Fleet had been strengthened on its material side by





RUSSIAN SAILORS IN A BRITISH PORT.

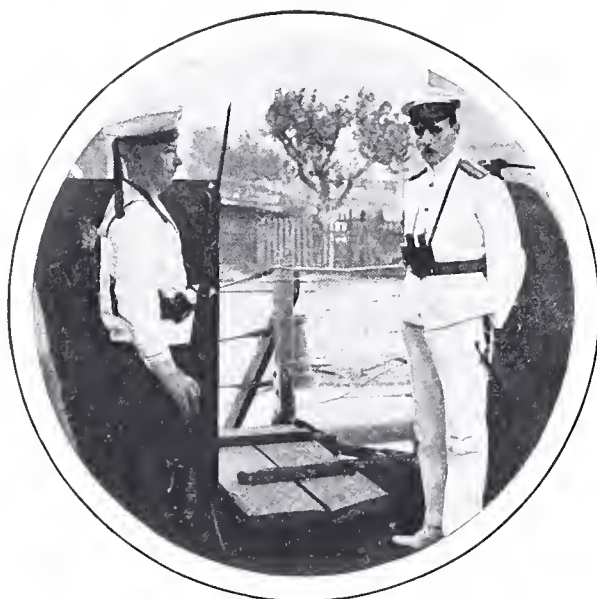


WASHING-DAY IN A RUSSIAN WARSHIP.



the completion of new vessels of various types and by the delivery of equipment from England.

It became evident early in the new year that a vigorous enemy thrust towards Petrograd would be made by land. Reinforcements had reached the German troops on the Dvina, and the Russian armies were short of munitions, having to battle with flesh and blood against



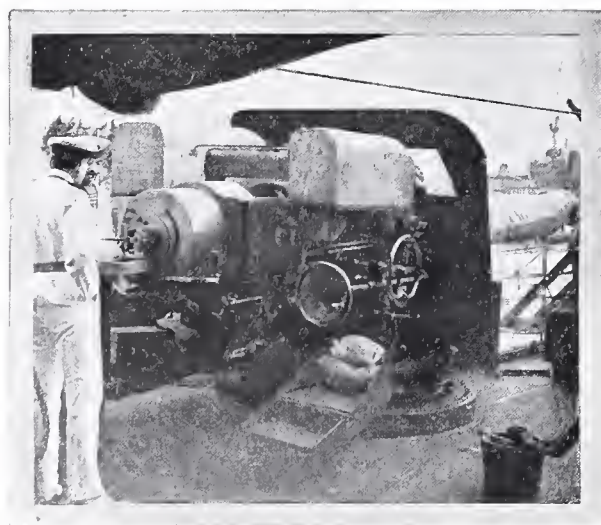
ON GUARD AT THE GANGWAY OF A RUSSIAN CRUISER.

iron, as Mr. Lloyd George vividly expressed it in a speech at the time. An offensive with the idea of reaching Petrograd was therefore bound to develop, with the help of the German Baltic Fleet. The latter was relied upon to a degree. The German army leaders promised their men, who were tired by the wearisome nature of their service, that special and important help would be rendered by the Imperial Navy. "We shall receive help from the sea," said von Below in one of his orders. "Supported by it we shall undoubtedly conclude the campaign along the coast of the Gulf of Riga and on the River Dvina, for which preparations will be completed during the inactivity of the winter."

As part of the precautionary measures against the dispatch of help to the Russian Fleet from England, the Germans had, in the autumn of 1915, laid down extensive minefields at the entrance to the Baltic with a complete disregard of international law and of the damage caused thereby to neutral interests. According to a notice in the *Nachrichten für Seefahrer* on September 22, 1915,

one of the first minefields was laid at the southern outlet of the Sound, the narrow water connecting the Baltic and North Sea. The bearings indicated a small elliptical field south of the island of Saltholm. Some concern was expressed by the neutral countries concerned, especially Sweden, but protests availed nothing. A considerable number of Swedish vessels were lost owing to the mines. As has been shown, too, even German ships did not escape damage thereby.

Meantime the Russian Fleet also continued its preparations for another year's campaign. Training and exercises were carried out during the enforced period of comparative idleness owing to the freezing over of the Baltic. In this preparation for action the Russian admirals had valuable experience of actual warfare to guide them. Whether the seamen as a whole entered into the spirit of their leaders is another matter, but the apt description of a qualified onlooker in regard to the Russian Baltic Fleet was that of "a gallant little Navy, well trained and well-organized." Although the unusually severe winter rendered the work more arduous and difficult, it nevertheless continued. The Russians took a page out of the German book in regard to the use of mines. An endeavour was made to establish a barrier of these machines in the region of the

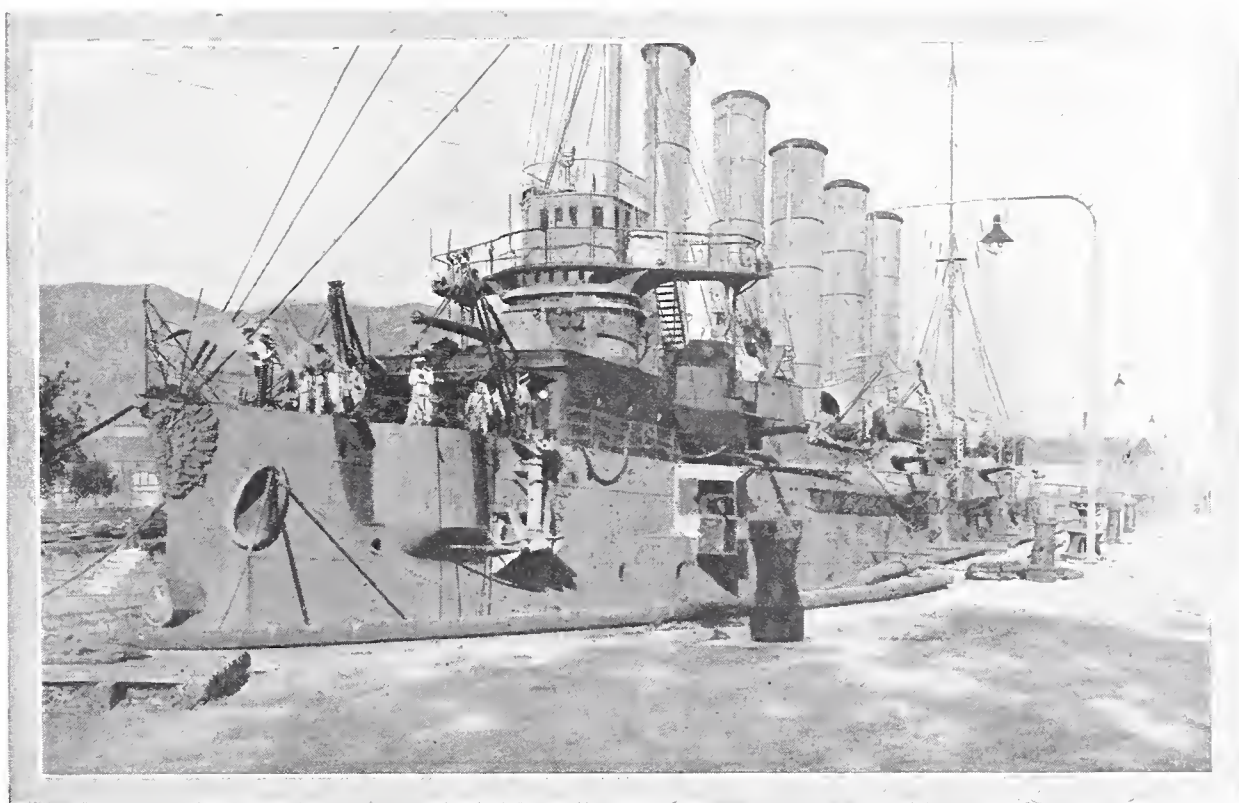


A 150mm. GUN ON BOARD A RUSSIAN CRUISER.

Aaland Islands. It became necessary, moreover, to fortify these islands in order to prevent the Germans from using them as a base for their operations. It was one of the curious events of the war from an historical standpoint that the Russian Government should take this step. After the Crimean War Russia promised her

enemies of those days—Great Britain and France—not to fortify these islands. In the Great War she found herself in alliance with her former antagonists, who were naturally anxious that she should, for her self-defence and in aid of their cause too, do that which in earlier circumstances they would have objected to. These purely defensive measures in the Aaland Islands were not allowed to pass without protest from the pro-German section of public opinion in Sweden. One of the most notable of these expressions came from Professor Steffen, who raised the question in the Rigsdag. But the

became more active in raids upon the English coast and shipping, and a good deal of mine-laying was resorted to. The sloop *Arabis* was sunk off the Dogger Bank in a night raid, and some torpedo craft was also lost in similar affairs. The cruiser *Arethusa* was among the victims of mines. Efforts to place raiding cruisers on the trade routes were made, and although in the main they were a failure, and the *Greif* was caught and sunk, at least one raider, the *Möwe*, broke through the North Sea cordon and made a large haul of shipping. Forays in the southern portion of the North



A RUSSIAN CRUISER IN A FRENCH PORT.

movement to embroil Sweden and the Entente Powers came to nothing.

For various reasons, the expected renewal of the offensive in the direction of Riga and Petrograd in the spring of 1916 did not materialise. On land, the army of General Brusiloff, taking the offensive, robbed the Germans of the initiative. They were compelled to deflect to the south a considerable portion of their reserves. On the western front, moreover, the attack undertaken some weeks earlier at Verdun, having met with unexpectedly strong resistance from the French, was unduly prolonged, and the operations in this theatre demanded fresh troops for their continuance. Similarly, at sea, the Germans appeared to be paying greater attention to the North Sea than in the previous year. Their torpedo craft

Sea became quite common, and in connexion with the Irish rebellion there was a bombardment of Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth on April 25, 1916. Finally, this growing activity in the North Sea culminated in the Battle of Jutland on May 31–June 1.\*

With so much to occupy the Germans in the principal theatre of naval fighting, and with the calls upon their military resources already referred to, it was not surprising that the Baltic did not become during 1916 that centre of important naval engagements which was expected. But, if actions on a large scale were lacking, the warfare of the smaller classes of vessels showed no abatement. Submarine warfare was especially vigorous on both sides. The ever-tightening blockade maintained

\* See Vol. IX., p. 121



around Germany by the Allies forced her to use to the utmost the comparatively safe naval connexion between Scandinavia and her Baltic ports, and the Russian Higher Command directed special efforts towards interrupting these communications or at least rendering them more difficult. In turn, the Germans had recourse to the convoy system, collecting their boats in groups and dispatching them through the danger zone under the protection of a special convoy of warships. This method did not guarantee the safety of the ships, however, as the convoys themselves offered a fine target for enterprising commanders of the Russian

vietim, being destroyed while on passage from Hamburg to Gefle with a cargo of coal. Next day, moreover, the German steamer *Trave*, from Lübeck to Norway with coal, was torpedoed off Kullen by an Allied submarine. Three more enemy vessels, the *Pera*, *Hebe*, and *Worms*, were sunk on May 22, representing between them over 10,000 tons of shipping. Throughout these operations the crews of the vessels destroyed were always given opportunities to make good their escape. There was nothing in the nature of the conditions appertaining to the German U boat attack and the operations were therefore of special



THE ADMIRALTY, PETROGRAD.

small craft. The British submarines also co-operated with good effect in these operations, their exploits being later on described by Mr. Rudyard Kipling in his "Tales of 'The Trade.'"

Among the successes achieved in this guerrilla warfare may be mentioned that on May 16, 1916, when a Russian submarine destroyed three enemy steamers, the *Hera*, *Kollga*, and *Bianca*. The first-named was an oil-tanker of 4,705 tons which was torpedoed off the Landsort Lightship at 9 a.m. The *Kollga* was a collier bound from Hamburg to Stockholm, and she was sunk 20 miles south-east of Landsort in the afternoon. About half an hour later the *Bianca* furnished a third

importance as showing how the destruction of commerce by submarines could be carried on in more or less humane fashion, free from the callous and cruel methods practised by the Germans.

The operations in the neighbourhood of Landsort eventually brought about a cruiser action. On June 30, between that place and Häfringe, a detachment of several Russian cruisers and torpedo boats, evidently on reconnaissance duties and acting in support of their lighter units, were attacked at day-break by a flotilla of German torpedo boats. The latter were easily repulsed by gunfire from the Russian ships, and submarine attacks

were also beaten off. Although German cruisers appear to have been in the vicinity they did not come into action, and the result of the whole affair was that neither side sustained any losses.

One of the most successful of the Russian attacks on German convoys in the Baltic in



**VICE-ADMIRAL NEPENIN,**  
Succeeded Admiral Kanin as Commander-in-Chief  
in the Baltic, October, 1916.

the spring and summer of 1916 was that which occurred on the night of June 13, which resembled in many ways the attacks which came to be delivered about eighteen months later by German torpedo craft upon British shipping between Scotland and Scandinavia. On the night in question about thirteen or fourteen merchantmen were sailing in company, protected by the German auxiliary cruiser *Hermann*, of about 3,000 tons, and some torpedo craft. The Russian attacking flotilla was reported to contain six destroyers. The *Hermann* was sunk in spite of her 6-in. guns, and in admitting the loss the Berlin authorities stated that she was attacked by four Russian destroyers and set on fire, when her own crew blew her up. Her commander and about one-third of her crew were rescued and made prisoners by the Russian seamen. Two other German units, of the small torpedo-boat type, were also accounted for. During the engagement the German ships fled towards the shelter of Swedish territorial waters, and for this reason the Russians did not pursue

them. The action lasted altogether for about forty-five minutes, and had it not been for the proximity of a neutral coast the toll of German loss would undoubtedly have been heavier.

Such was the nature of the naval operations in the Baltic during 1916, coupled with a certain amount of aerial activity on both sides, in which the Russian seamen showed their courage and dexterity in many bombing raids upon the German aerodromes. If, on the whole, the year's happenings had the appearance of insignificant incidents of guerilla warfare, this was entirely due to the marked passivity of the German seamen. The Petrograd Correspondent of *The Times*, contributing to the Russian Supplement on March 25, 1916, an interesting review of the Russian Fleet, referred to an interview which Admiral Kanin, the Baltic Commander-in-Chief, had recently

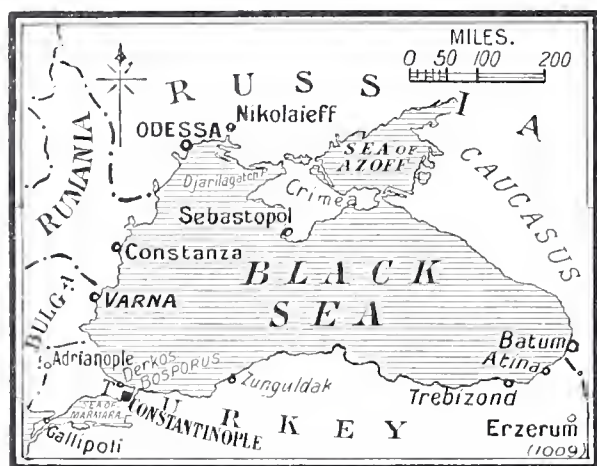


**MDME. SKVORTZOVA,**  
Organiser and Commander of the Naval  
Women's Battalion of Death.

given to a correspondent of the *Novoe Vremya*, M. Alexander Pilenko, who was granted permission to visit the ships. "The fundamental, strategic picture," said the Admiral, "is amply clear. The Baltic Fleet is a continuation of the extreme flank of the Army; the task of the Fleet is, as far as possible, to support the movements of the



Army, protecting it against envelopment by the German Fleet. What will happen in the future, who knows? So far, however, we may deem our work not futile. One English specialist has said that in the present war there have been two turning points, neither of them particularly brilliant or vivid, but extraordinarily important—the Marne and Riga Gulf. Paris was saved on the Marne, while



THE BLACK SEA.

in the Riga Gulf the struggle for the approaches to Petrograd terminated in our favour.”

To Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, who interviewed him on behalf of *The Daily Mail* shortly afterwards, Admiral Kanin said: “You understand, of course, that we are in a quite different position from that of a year ago. We are, to begin with, very much stronger in ships. I have, in addition to the four new Dreadnoughts, a large number of other ships put in commission during the last twelve months. In torpedo boats and submarines we are now especially strong. Our mine-layers and mine-sweepers are numerous and devoted. Very likely it is the increase of our strength which keeps the enemy away. Our scouts never see any German ships. This year we have had much clearer weather than last, not so many sea-fogs. Never a sign of them.”

Admiral Kanin relinquished command of the Baltic Fleet in October, 1916, and was appointed a Member of the Council of the Empire. His successor was Vice-Admiral Nepenin, who was formerly in command of the torpedo craft division in the Baltic, and who received the Order of St. George for his work in the torpedo-boat defence of Port Arthur during the war with Japan.\*

The mastery of the Black Sea on the entry

of Turkey into the war on November 5, 1914, was in dispute, owing to the addition to the Ottoman Navy of the ex-German cruisers Goeben and Breslau. With the aid of these vessels the Turks carried out a few raids and desultory bombardments in the Black Sea until November 18, 1914, when the Russian Fleet brought the Ottoman ships to action and damaged them in a running fight. Owing to her injuries on this occasion, and to the fact of her striking a mine in the Bosphorus, the Goeben was out of action for several months afterwards. With her removal from active operations, the command of the Black Sea passed definitely into the hands of the Russians, whose Fleet had been augmented by the first “Dreadnought” completed at Nikolaieff, the Empress Maria.

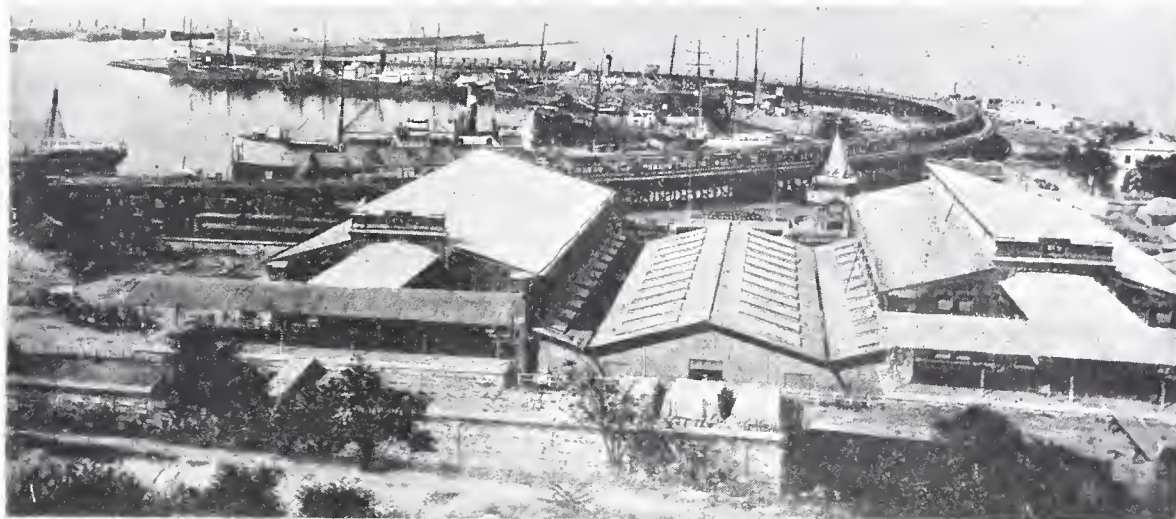
The main operations of the Russian ships



ADMIRAL EBERHARDT,  
Commander-in-Chief of the Black Sea Fleet.

were directed against the Bosphorus, with the idea of facilitating the task of, and relieving the pressure on, the Allies at the opposite end of the Sea of Marmara. Much more might have been accomplished in this connexion had the Russians had at their disposal a surplus of pre-Dreadnought battleships such as the French and British admirals were using off Gallipoli. Whilst the latter could afford to carry out hazardous operations in which the loss of a few ships could be sustained with comparative impunity, the loss of Russian ships in any

\* See Vol. X., p. 73.



ODESSA HARBOUR.

such enterprise might have given Turkey the upper hand in the Black Sea. Moreover, an attack in force with the idea of seizing the Bosphorus forts was out of the question in the absence of adequate military cooperation.

Thus the task of the Russian Fleet under Admiral Eberhardt was limited during the time of the Dardanelles expedition to preventing the enemy from concentrating his forces in the Gallipoli Peninsula. This was done by means of energetic and strong demonstrations. One of the chief of these was carried out on the morning of March 28, 1915, when the Russian Fleet appeared in full sight of the Bosphorus forts and opened fire upon them. Fire was first directed against the batteries of Elmas, and Fort Riva, to the south of Elmas. Then the ships transferred their attentions from the Asiatic to the European side and bombarded Cape Panas. Preceded by torpedo craft and minesweepers, the Russians closed to within 8,000 yards, and their seaplanes assisted in the direction of fire as well as dropping bombs on the fortifications and boats of the enemy. A good deal of damage was inflicted by this attack. In the Bosphorus itself a large Turkish troop transport was sunk during the operations. In a later bombardment in April both the Bosphorus lighthouses and the forts of Karibdic, Yun, Burnu, Uzuniar, both Kavaks and

Madjar were shelled. A Turkish armoured ship, reported to be the ex-German battleship, Weissenburg, renamed Torgut Reis, opened an ineffective fire against the Russian ships. Equally ineffective was the attack of the Turkish torpedo craft. As soon as their destroyers emerged from the Straits they were heavily bombarded and driven back again into shelter.

In another way the Russians by means of their Fleet helped the Allied campaign at the Dardanelles. They carried out reconnaissances of the gulfs and bays in the neighbourhood of the Bosphorus which might have been suitable for the landing of a military force. The Bay of Inaid was among these. Such signs of activity obviously did not allow the Turks to weaken the defences of the Bosphorus in order to strengthen those of the Dardanelles. The Ottoman Government were kept in suspense on two fronts as to what might happen. Moreover, the enterprising Russian airmen increased the general feeling of anxiety by visits to important towns, including Constantinople. An interesting subject for speculation was provided as to the probable outcome of the Russian operations if Admiral Eberhardt had had at his disposal a similar preponderance to that enjoyed by the Franco-British commanders in the Mediterranean. Although the Russians practically exercised undisputed con-



trol in the Black Sea from about the beginning of 1915, they had no force available such as that possessed by Great Britain in what Mr. Churchill called the "surplus fleet." On the anniversary of Russia's declaration of war her Minister of Marine made the following reference to the situation in this theatre:—"In the Black Sea, our fleet, there, too, not so strong as the united Tureo-German Navy, has also paralysed its adversary and inflicted severe losses on him, and, without sustaining loss itself, is step by step developing the problem so dear to the Russian heart. . . . The workmen are doing wonders in productive energy, so that the Baltic Fleet was strengthened towards the end of last year by new fighting units, and so was the Black Sea Fleet."

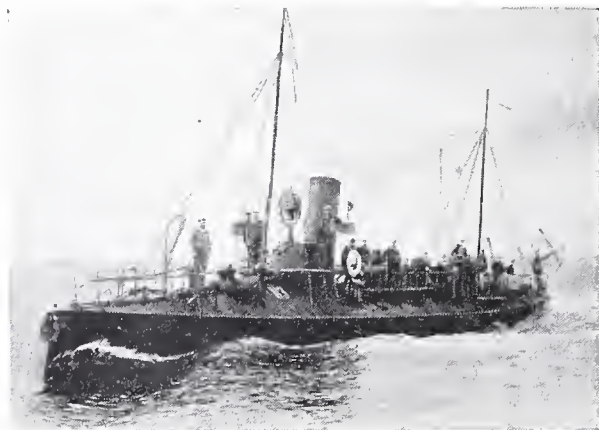
One of the light cruisers possessed by Turkey before the war, the American-built vessel *Medjidieh*, of 3,300 tons, was destroyed by a mine in the Gulf of Odessa on April 3, 1915. Although a Berlin official telegram said that the *Medjidieh*, after striking a drifting mine, was torpedoed by another Ottoman vessel to prevent the Russians from raising her, she was successfully salvaged on June 8 and brought into port. Later on she was added to the Russian Navy as the *Prout*.



A GERMAN WARSHIP AT ODESSA.  
Showing the Harbour Lighthouse.

An important feature of the Russian operations in the Black Sea right up to the time of the Revolution was the blockade of the enemy's coast and harbours and the stoppage of his oversea transport.\* The traffic in coal from the colliery district of Zunguldak and other places

to Constantinople was among the arteries of commerce severed by this consistent and arduous work of the Russian seamen. This phase of Russian activity the enemy felt most. Hundreds of Turkish craft, especially sailing vessels, were destroyed, and when towards the autumn of 1915 the Turks made an attempt



A RUSSIAN TORPEDO BOAT.

to organize mercantile convoys, escorted by a cruiser, in the endeavour to get supplies through, they were no more successful, the Russian torpedo craft making short work of such a movement. It was in connexion with this work of commerce destruction and blockade that the General Staff of the Navy at Petrograd issued the following statement on August 4, 1915:—

A German official *communiqué* accuses our sailors in the Black Sea of barbarous acts against Turkish ships, alleging that the Russians sink vessels with their crews without first examining them. Although the accusations are made by a Government which violates not only international laws but the customary principles of humanity, the General Staff feels bound to refute these accusations, declaring that the German *communiqué* is a lie. Our sailors destroy Turkish ships because they transport war material, coal, and petrol. On every occasion they adopt all measures to save the crews, and the ships are only shelled if they refuse to stop after demand, and in these cases the crews are always captured first. In several cases the sailors prefer to regain the shore by swimming, in order to avoid capture, and they are never fired at, and all those who surrender are taken on board the warships and sent to Sebastopol. This rule is followed even when the Turkish ships, pretending that they wish to surrender, open fire on our submarines. Special lists are made of the prisoners captured, and they prove that not a single man of the captured crews has been left to his fate. All the prisoners every time express their satisfaction for the humane treatment accorded them.

Another and most important phase of the operations of the Russian Black Sea Fleet was the assistance afforded to the Russian armies in the Caucasus. It was probably this aspect of the work of the seamen which was of the greatest help to the Russian cause. Certainly the Turks must have felt the pressure exerted

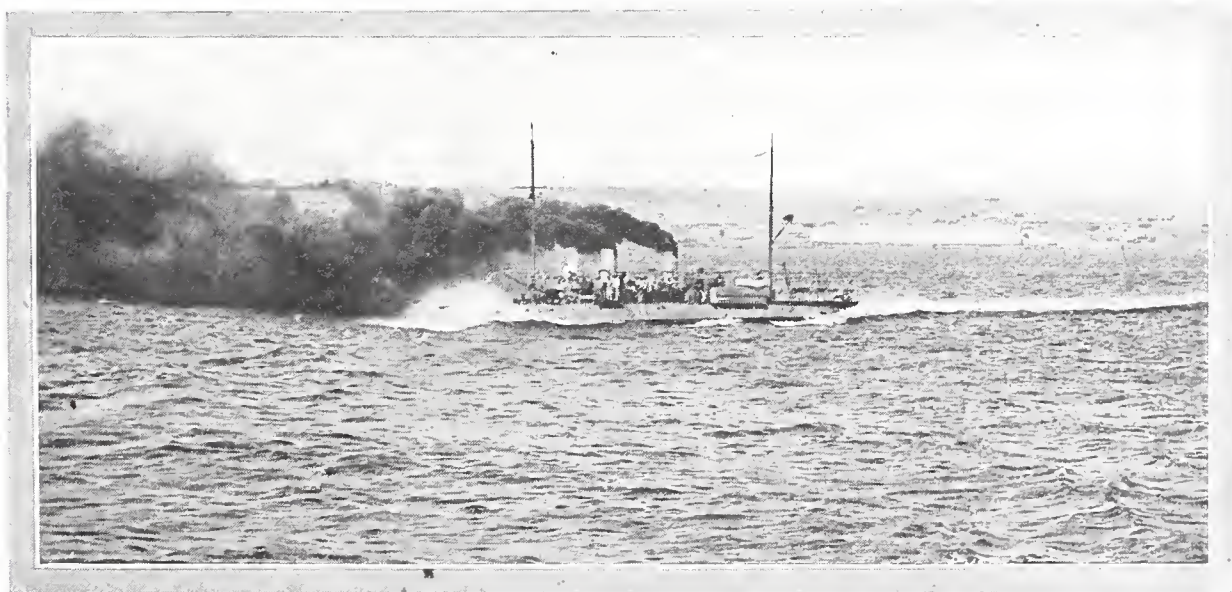
\* See Vol. X., p. 74.



by the sea forces most of all in the crippling effect it had upon the operations of their troops. The Turkish armies on the Caucasus front did not have the assistance of any railways in their rear except the line to Baghdad, which, moreover, was only in course of construction. In the absence of such indispensable communications in modern warfare, they found themselves in a very difficult position with regard to the transport of vital supplies of all kinds from their bases. It was true that the absence of tolerably good roads was somewhat compensated for by the possibility of using local resources of stores prepared before the war at Erzerum and other points. But the most convenient way for the Turks to transport their armies, and the great bulk of material required for their maintenance in an effective state, was by sea, and this means of communication was denied to them by the Russian seamen having seized the command of the waters of the Black Sea. The Turks, moreover, like their German masters in another theatre, accepted this condition of things without question. They did not challenge an action with a view to breaking the power of the Russians and so possibly opening up the sea road for their soldiers. Now and then they

sea for the Turks, and as they avoided a decisive engagement all else that they could do was futile from the standpoint of military transport. The only help given by the Turco-German Fleet to their mercantile marine was by occasional raids against the Russian coast, and in characteristic German fashion these raids were directed against the parts at which there were no defences. The object was no doubt to divert the attention of the Russian Fleet from the Anatolian coast, but it did not succeed.

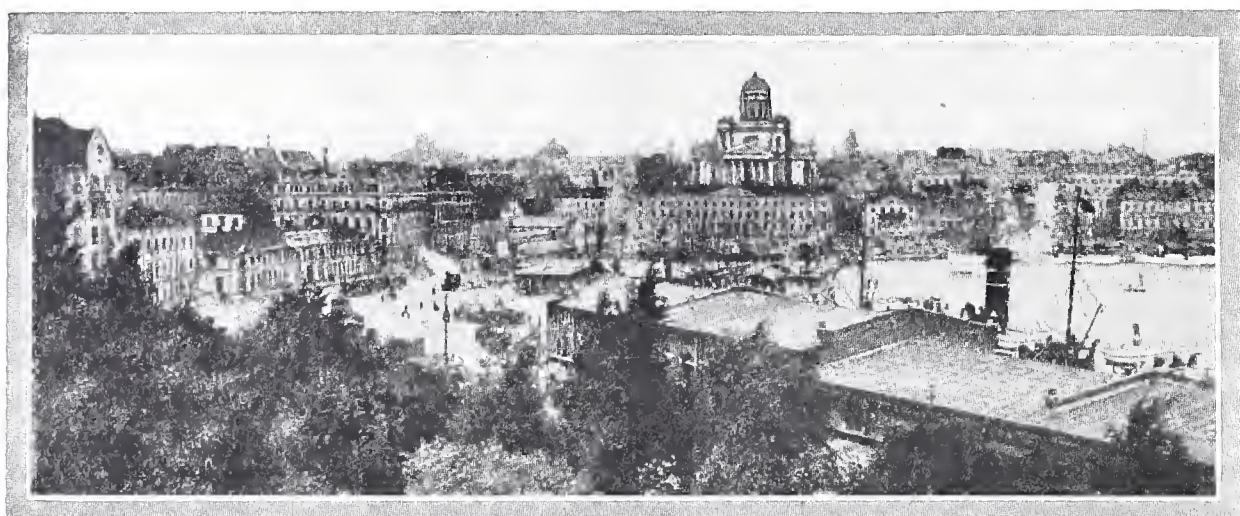
In the spring of 1916 the fruits of Russian sea power in the Black Sea were reaped when the Russians began the operations which ended in the capture of Trebizond, Erzerum, and other brilliant achievements. On the night of March 4, 1916, Russian troops were landed under cover of a heavy fire from the Fleet at the town of Atina, 60 miles east of Trebizond, at which last-named port torpedo boats also made a demonstration to distract the enemy's attention. Writing on March 7, *The Times* Correspondent at Petrograd stated that "the able co-ordination of the naval and military operations, in which the Fleet turned the Turkish flank, conferred on the Russians a big advantage, resulting in the enemy's discomfiture." Trebi-



RUSSIAN DESTROYER COMING OUT OF SEBASTOPOL HARBOUR WITH A STRONG WIND AFT.

would hazard the dispatch of a number of steamers and sailing boats, which would endeavour to slip across without being intercepted. A few succeeded, as was inevitable, but a large percentage of loss was incurred in these enterprises, which could not possibly be relied on to support military operations. There was no short cut to the command of the

zond fell to the advancing troops under the Grand Duke Nicholas on April 18, 1916, and in announcing this victory the official *communiqué* said: "The successful cooperation of the Fleet permitted us to effect the most daring landing operations, and to give continual artillery support to the troops, which were operating in the coastal region."



HELSINGFORS.

When Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the enemies of the Power to whom she owed her liberation, the sphere of the cruising operations of the Russian Fleet was extended, and the Bulgarian port of Varna was repeatedly subjected to bombardment by the ships under Admiral Eberhardt.\* Such attacks indicated clearly to Bulgaria the possibility of Russia landing troops on her coast if she so desired, and therefore the enemy was obliged to maintain large military forces in the districts around Varna to deal with any such descent. There were counter raids indulged in at times by the Goeben and Breslau, the light cruisers Hamidieh and Medjidieh, and the Turco-German submarines, but these were all of small account and achieved no real purpose.

In 1916 Rumania's Government determined to enter the struggle, and at first achieved some brilliant military successes but the enemy were able to gather superior forces, and not only stopped the Rumanian and Russian advance, but forced the evacuation of the captured territory and a considerable part of Rumanian soil as well. During those days of stubborn fighting against great odds, and especially at the evacuation of Constanza, the Russian Fleet brought valuable help to the sorely tried armies of the Allies, and rendered easier their task in the struggle.

Simultaneously with these major operations the small craft of the Russian Fleet maintained their warfare with characteristic energy. They were active in patrol duties, in convoy work, and in many other ways, and many gallant deeds stand to the account of the men in the torpedo flotillas. So, too, with the

submarines. Mention may be made particularly of the action fought between the Russian submarine Tyulen, commanded by Lieutenant-Commander Kititzin, and the Turkish transport Rodosto, of 6,000 tons displacement, which resulted in the capture of the latter, probably the first time in history that underwater craft had achieved such a feat and brought an enemy vessel of such a type and size proudly into port. The fight occurred near the Bosphorus on October 12, 1916, and by skilful handling and brilliance in attack the Tyulen had got her antagonist on fire in several places within an hour, with little or no damage to herself. The transport, despite her own armament, was outclassed and outfought, and, with her steering gear destroyed, she broke off the action. The Tyulen was then placed alongside, and the Russian seamen took charge, repaired the damage after several hours' work, and brought the ship safely to Sebastopol, the journey occupying 40 hours. For his skill and gallantry the Commander of the Tyulen was awarded the Order of St. George.

A misfortune which befell the Russian Navy in the Black Sea on October 20, 1916, was the destruction by fire and explosion of the battleship Empress Maria, the first of the "Dreadnoughts" built at Nikolaieff. Efforts to localize the fire and flood the magazine could not be taken in time, and over 200 of the crew were killed or died of injuries.

The Russian naval airmen in the Black Sea were keen rivals of the submarine crews in regard to enterprise and daring. Bombing raids took them many miles over enemy country, and to Constantinople itself, as well as to the Turkish-Bulgarian town of Adrian-

\* See Vol. X., p. 68.

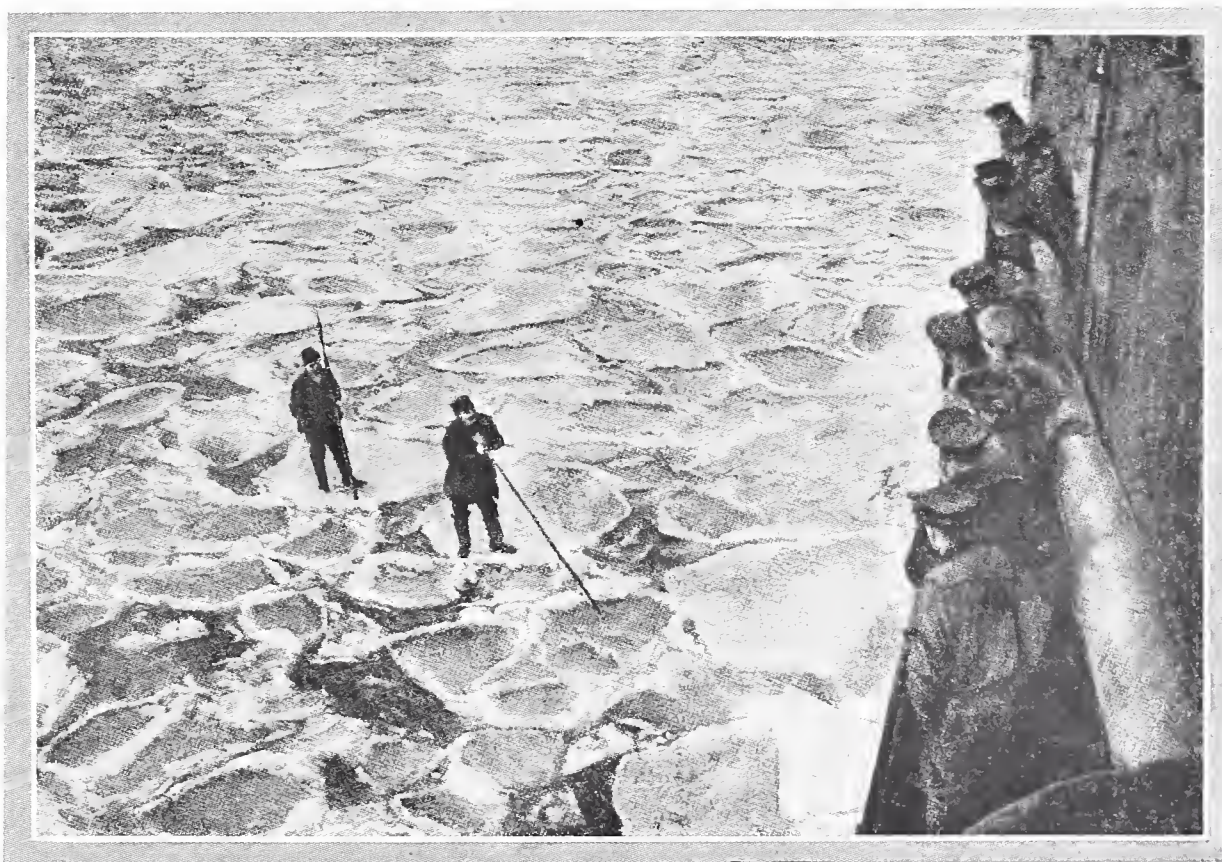


ople. On one occasion also Russian airmen captured a schooner. On March 27, 1917, during a seaplane raid on Derkos (27 miles to the north-west of Constantinople), one of the Russian machines was hit in the petrol tank and compelled to descend. The airmen, Lieutenant Sergeeff and Sub-Lieutenant Tur, seeing a Turkish schooner, attacked it as they came down, and by the aid of machine-gun fire drove the crew from the deck. On reaching the water the airmen destroyed their machine, after taking from it the compass, machine gun, and other important articles, then boarded the schooner and returned to Russian shores. Encountering a heavy storm on April 1 off the Djarilagatch Peninsula, north of Sebastopol, they weathered this successfully, and eventually returned from the Peninsula to Sebastopol in a torpedo boat. The only provisions available in the schooner consisted of a few pieces of bread and a little fresh water, so that the Russian airmen's achievement was one of endurance as well as skill and courage.

Something must now be said about the conditions obtaining in the Russian Navy on the eve of the outbreak of the Revolution. During the winter of 1916-17 the activity of the Russian Fleets in the Baltic and Black Sea

had been declining. The Baltic battleships were confined to their main Finnish base at Helsingfors, the cruisers to Reval, and the destroyers, submarines, minelayers and mine-sweepers were distributed between various harbours, including Abo, the Aaland Islands, the Moon Sound, and Arensburg. In these ports the vessels remained in more or less enforced idleness. Extensive minefields afforded them protection against enemy attack by sea, and there was also a belt of ice three feet thick.

Offensive operations were hardly possible in winter owing to the atmospheric conditions obtaining; and having, therefore, a good deal of time on their hands it was inevitable that officers and men should be susceptible to the political influences at work in the country. From December to April, the only units of the Baltic Fleet that were occupied in real work were the ice-breakers, keeping open certain channels of communication between the main ports, and a few auxiliary craft guarding the minefields and escorting traffic off the long coastline of Finland. The bulk of the fleet lay idle and safe in harbour—safe from open attack by enemy force, but exposed to all kinds of insidious peace rumours, social unrest, and revolutionary agitation.



ICE IN THE BALTIC: PILOTS GOING ABOARD A WARSHIP.

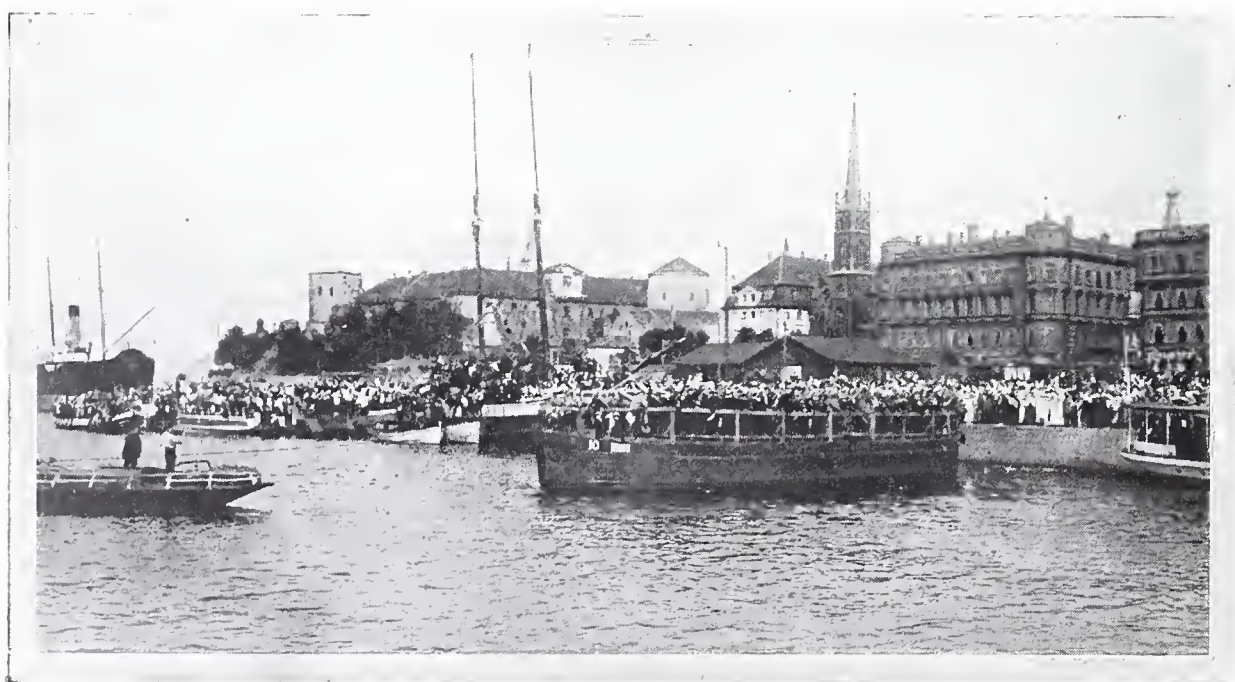


The conditions in the Baltic were most favourable for the dissemination of disturbing reports and enemy propaganda. The population in Finland and Esthonia, differing from the Russians in language, religion, and culture, as well as in race and temperament, was not animated by friendly feelings towards either the Tsar's bureaucracy or his Navy and Army. From the beginning of the war the upper classes in Finland and Esthonia had entertained concealed sympathies for Germany. The Russian officers came little into touch with these classes, but the sailors and soldiers were in frequent communication with the workmen and peasantry, the majority of whom were Socialists infected by a strong animosity towards every representative of the so-called *bourgeoisie*. In 1914-15, when a strong wave of patriotism swept over the Russian Empire, Finland and the Baltic provinces remained cool and sceptical. In 1916, Finns and Esthonians rejoiced at the misfortunes of the Russian Army, and in the following year they went farther and helped the German propaganda, as well as any revolutionary agitation between Russian soldiers and sailors who happened to be in their country.

Both Helsingfors and Reval were great industrial centres. With the ships surrounded by ice, and little drill possible owing to the extreme cold, the Russian sailors had hardly any restrictions in the matter of leave. They went about freely, attending political and democratic meetings, inhaling the tainted

air of unrest, class hatred, and social discontent. In these circumstances the task of the officers responsible for the discipline and management of the various units was difficult beyond measure. It called for men of wide sympathies and strength of character, tactful but firm, and with a complete grasp of the problems and under-currents of thought which agitated the minds of the men whom they commanded. Unfortunately officers of this type were not very numerous under the conditions which obtained at the time. The Naval Cadet School at Petrograd was a privileged institution, open to boys of the higher classes only, and leavened with strong aristocratic tendencies and aspirations. Such ambitions were often promoted in the Naval Service to the detriment of efficiency. A lower deck seaman could never rise to a commission in the Russian Navy. The gulf between officers and men was about as wide as it could possibly be. Whatever the conditions of service, there was hardly in any ship a feeling of real professional comradeship between the officers in charge and the men serving under them.

Lack of activity, then, was the main cause of the demoralization in the Baltic Fleet. Lack of leadership was a contributory factor of great importance. The political conditions throughout Russia, in general, and in Finland and Esthonia in particular, provided an environment in which the seeds of trouble and disquiet were allowed to have full scope and ripen and flourish. It could hardly have been



RIGA HARBOUR: LETTISH VOLUNTEERS EMBARKING.





## REVAL.

otherwise. Every succeeding winter of the war, with all its inevitable trials and disappointments, found the Baltic Fleet idle in harbour, surrounded by a population seething with sedition, and ripe for any revolutionary movement. The battleship crews, in which a large proportion of the Baltic seamen were serving, were subjected to this insidious political disease both summer and winter, for they only took their ships out of port for short cruises and demonstrations. Nor was it only outside the Navy that agitation flourished. Propaganda was actively carried on inside the naval establishments. At Kronstadt, for instance, the Gunnery, Torpedo, and Stokers' Training Schools, containing men of intelligence and ambition, were notorious centres of revolutionary agitation.

As already mentioned, late in 1916 Admiral Kanin had been superseded as Commander-in-Chief by Rear-Admiral Nepenin, a strong disciplinarian of Essen's school, who tried at once to check the growing unrest by severe measures of repression. Numerous agitators were arrested in Reval and Helsingfors—some discharged sailors, others men on active service. Courts-martial increased in frequency, and leave was either stopped or curtailed for officers and men. Similar measures were taken in Kronstadt by the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Viren, who was also a strict disciplinarian. But the unfavourable conditions remained, and therefore such efforts to stem the progress of unrest were futile. It might have been different had the Fleet as a whole been called upon for a series of active operations at sea. But the

ships could not weigh anchor, they remained idly at their moorings, the crews had far too much lazy time, and the most seditious rumours went on circulating from Petrograd.

Among the *personnel* in the naval barracks in Kronstadt, Reval, and Helsingfors were large numbers of time-expired seamen who had been re-enlisted for all kinds of auxiliary craft. These men remembered the naval riots and mutinies of 1905-06, and their severe repression by inquiries and courts-martial sitting several years after the incidents occurred. The spirit of old grievances revived, and added fuel to the flames of the new agitation. Then, again, a scarcity of food had made itself felt all over Russia, owing to transport difficulties, but it was most manifest in the north. Here was another subject for grumbling and discontent.

From what has been said, it will be seen that in March, 1917, when the Russian capital was set on fire by the great revolutionary movement which resulted in the overthrow of the Monarchy, the Baltic Fleet was like a powder magazine—ready to explode at the slightest touch. The only part of it which remained intact and loyal was—characteristically enough—the force in the Gulf of Riga. These were the seamen nearest to the enemy, watching the avenues of approach, faithful and enduring by night and day, and taking part in every military operation along the coast. Even in the severe conditions of winter, they remained active, and proved again the truth of the dictum that activity and the employment of the faculties of the men was the best remedy against depression, sedition, and discontent.

Turning to the conditions in the Black Sea, these were not so favourable to the spread of the revolutionary spirit as in the Baltic. As with the forces in the Gulf of Riga, the Black Sea vessels occupied their time in warlike operations. It was true that for some time the main battle fleet lay in the beautiful harbour of Sebastopol, but it made frequent cruises to sea, while there was always present the possibility of an encounter with the enemy and the

naval disorders in most of the northern ports, the Black Sea Fleet was slow to join in the movement. It did not immediately lose its self-control and discipline, nor its confidence in the wisdom and leadership of its gallant Commander-in-Chief.

The popular rising in Petrograd began on March 9, 1917, and during the next two days armed sailors and soldiers joined the crowds of workmen to fight the police. Some Ministers



KRONSTADT HARBOUR.

excitement of battle. As for the cruisers and gunboats, destroyers and submarines, they were constantly at work, patrolling and escorting, blockading the entrance to the Bosphorus, and keeping a close watch upon the long Anatolian coast of Turkey. A constant stream of transports and supply ships to the Caucasus had to be protected, and there were also military operations to support by gunfire from the sea. The foregoing pages have shown in brief what a varied and extensive amount of service was carried out by the Russian seamen. In Admiral Koltchak they had an excellent commander-in-chief, active and energetic, a born leader of men, inspiring officers and men with a military spirit, and enjoying the full confidence of all under him.\* On replacing the aged Admiral Eberhardt, Admiral Koltchak had made it his policy to keep the efficiency of his fleet at a high level by constant training and exercises, instilling into the minds of his officers and men the importance of being prepared for any meeting with the enemy. The occasional raids upon the Bulgarian and Turkish coasts, although minor in comparison with the effect which other operations by sea had upon the progress of the war, all helped to keep alive the offensive spirit of the seamen, their zeal and efficiency. Thus it was that when the first waves of the revolution swept over Russia, followed by military and

and higher officials of the Tsar's Government took refuge in the Admiralty, protected by a Naval Guard, and on the 12th the old fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, situated on the opposite bank of the Neva, together with a huge arsenal of arms, were captured by the crowd.\* The news of these events quickly spread, and the revolutionaries, being joined by the staffs of some of the wireless stations in Petrograd, it was immediately circulated throughout the country. At Kronstadt and Helsingfors, the Naval Commanders-in-Chief, although well aware of the impending dangers for the Fleet and establishments on shore in case of a serious popular rising, did not believe that the revolt would attain such quick success.

Kronstadt is divided by a few miles of sea from the coast, and in winter time is in communication with Petrograd by rail and sledges over the ice. Even without wireless telegraphy, therefore, Kronstadt hardly could be isolated from the capital. Here, as well as at Helsingfors, the revolutionary agitators were the best-informed people of every movement in Petrograd, where a Committee of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates was already sitting on March 13. The keenly-awaited news of the first success attained by the democracy reached the seamen by private channels almost before the higher command was aware of it, and cer-

\* See Vol. X., p. 72.

\* See Vol. XIII., p. 97.



tainly before it was known to the officers in general. The consequence was that the seamen lost any confidence they might have had in their officers to set an example of the right action to take. So little did the officers know and realize what was taking place that the seamen believed them to be concealing the truth. It appeared to the men that, so slow were their officers to appreciate the significance of things, these commanders might lead them against the popular rising. This could not be suffered at any cost. Thus the uncertainty of the standpoint of the officers increased the popular feeling and the spirit of revolt.

On March 13 some obsolete guns from the St. Peter and Paul Fortress were turned against the Admiralty in Petrograd, and the last stronghold of the old régime surrendered to the triumphant people. At the same time the



**ADMIRAL KOLTCHAK,**  
Commander-in-Chief of the Black Sea Fleet.

incendiary document entitled "Order No. 1," and signed by some members of the new Revolutionary Committee—the so-called Soviet—summoned the troops to disregard their officers and the Duma, and to assume charge of the internal discipline as well as political organization and leadership. It is impossible to estimate if and to what extent this Order No. 1 was responsible for the excesses which were committed by sailors and soldiers during the ensuing days in Kronstadt and Helsingfors.

Another Order, "No. 2," was issued by the same Soviet on March 18, which tried to evade the responsibility for these events. But there can hardly be any doubt that from the first days of the Revolution the Petrograd Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates directed by wireless and personal communication most of the revolts, excesses, and mutinies in the Baltic Fleet.



**ADMIRAL VIREN,**  
Commander-in-Chief at Kronstadt.

At Kronstadt the dawn of revolution was marked by cruel outrages. On March 13 a large crowd of sailors gathered in front of the Commander-in-Chief's house, armed with rifles and machine-guns, and carrying red flags and banners bearing revolutionary mottoes. Admiral Viren went out into the street to try and appease the seamen, and was making an appeal to their loyalty when a shot was fired from among the crowd at his back. This was the signal for further excesses on the part of the mob. The Admiral was stabbed by several bayonets and his body mutilated under the eyes of his wife and daughter. The next victim of the passion of the crowd was the Chief of the Naval Staff, Rear-Admiral Butakoff. The son of a famous Admiral whose name was well known outside Russia in the 'sixties and 'seventies of the last century, he did not falter when carried away by the crowd, but endeavoured to appeal to their loyalty as his Commander-in-Chief had done. He was, however, shot down while defiantly shouting the proud words: "Dare to touch a Russian Admiral!"

Another victim was Rear-Admiral Nicholas



VISIT TO A RUSSIAN CRUISER OF A MEMBER OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

Cheers for the Allies

de Rein, the Director of the Torpedo School and Training Division. A talented and capable officer, who as a captain was for a time Russian Naval Attaché in London, Rear-Admiral de Rein was arrested, and then shot on his way to prison. Scores of other naval officers were murdered during the first two or three days of the revolution in Kronstadt. Many were also imprisoned and kept in custody for periods which eventually ran into months, some of these officers even dying from lack of food, bad treatment, filthy conditions, and exposure to the cold weather.

On March 14, 1917, two deputies were sent to Kronstadt by the Central Soviet and the Duma. The garrison of Kronstadt, and naval and military forces there, placed themselves at the disposal of the Provisional Government, and the wholesale massacre of officers was stopped. But the officers in prison were not released, and many instances occurred, in the streets, in the barracks, and on board ship, in which officers were subjected to indignities and violence, some being even killed. The commanders with a reputation of having been severe disciplinarians were specially marked down for personal vengeance on the part of the infuriated seamen.

At length a local Soviet was elected by the population of Kronstadt, headed by sailors and civilians holding extreme revolutionary views. By this body Kronstadt was proclaimed to be a

separate republic, founded on Socialistic or rather Communistic principles. The supreme authority of the Provisional Government was not recognised. Instead, the Kronstadt Soviet was from the outset strongly in support of the Central Soviet of Workmen and Soldiers' Delegates in Petrograd. A sub-lieutenant was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Naval Forces, and a private sailor commander of all training ships. Army and Navy stores were guarded, part of the provisions being distributed by rations to the poorer classes. For several months Kronstadt defied Petrograd and the Provisional Government, sending armed troops, sailors and ships to support the extremists.

At Helsingfors the naval mutinies started on March 16, 1917.\* Some of the older battleships hoisted the red flag in the morning, the men arresting their officers, killing some of them, and proclaiming their allegiance to the revolution in Petrograd. Admiral Nepenin knew of the Tsar's abdication, but was not allowed to publish the news. He tried to isolate the mutinous ships, and almost succeeded in keeping the men quiet, when the news of the abdication was received in Helsingfors and spread by agitators. The officers were at once accused of counter-revolutionary

\* See Vol. XIV., p. 365.



intentions, as happened at Kronstadt, and armed crowds of sailors and soldiers rushed into the streets, wildly chasing and insulting every officer they met.

The fate of the Commander-in-Chief, who was with his staff on board an auxiliary cruiser close to the pier, remained for a time in the balance. It was discussed at a huge meeting of sailors and soldiers in the city, and a decision was arrived at to put him under arrest ashore. A crowd of delegates went to the port. The Admiral's staff tried to persuade him to remain on board, his flag-lieutenant proposing himself as a hostage. But Admiral Nepenin believed his presence would rather appease the crowd. He went out calmly on to the ice, followed by his flag-lieutenant, and on being told he was arrested by the authority of a revolutionary meeting he went with the delegates to the Naval yard. A civilian proposed to kill the Admiral, as the surest way to get rid of him. When told he was to be executed he lit a cigarette, and faced death with calm resolution. He was shot in the back by the same civilian who had proposed his murder, and a story was current that the man was a German agent. On the same day Admirals Protopopoff, Nebolsin, and many other naval officers were murdered in Helsingfors, mainly by hands of sailors and soldiers, the Finnish workmen taking no part in this slaughter. Several officers were saved by the local police and

population. The massacre was stopped by delegates of the Provisional Government, the Duma, and the Central Soviet, who were sent by special train from Petrograd to check the excesses. An important part in these negotiations was played by M. Kerensky, then Minister of Justice. The last message received at the Admiralty from Admiral Nepenin concluded with the pregnant sentence: "The Baltic Fleet has ceased to be a military force."

At Reval, where most of the cruisers and submarines were in harbour, the Officer Commanding, Rear-Admiral Verderevsky, succeeded in preventing a mutiny by negotiation, and by making certain concessions to the popular feeling. The ships remained isolated from the shore, and no blood was shed in the Fleet.

Turning now to the Black Sea, the conditions in this theatre were different from those in the Baltic. The ships and auxiliary craft lying at anchor were easily isolated from the shore. Admiral Koltchak was in close touch with the Admiralty in Petrograd. During the most critical days of negotiations between the Provisional Government and the Tsar, when wild rumours were in circulation all over Russia, the Admiral put to sea with the bulk of his forces. When the Tsar had actually abdicated, and order was restored in Petrograd, the Fleet was informed of the fact by wireless, and returned to Sebastopol,



SEBASTOPOL: THE HARBOUR AND THE BOULEVARD SEBASTOPOL.

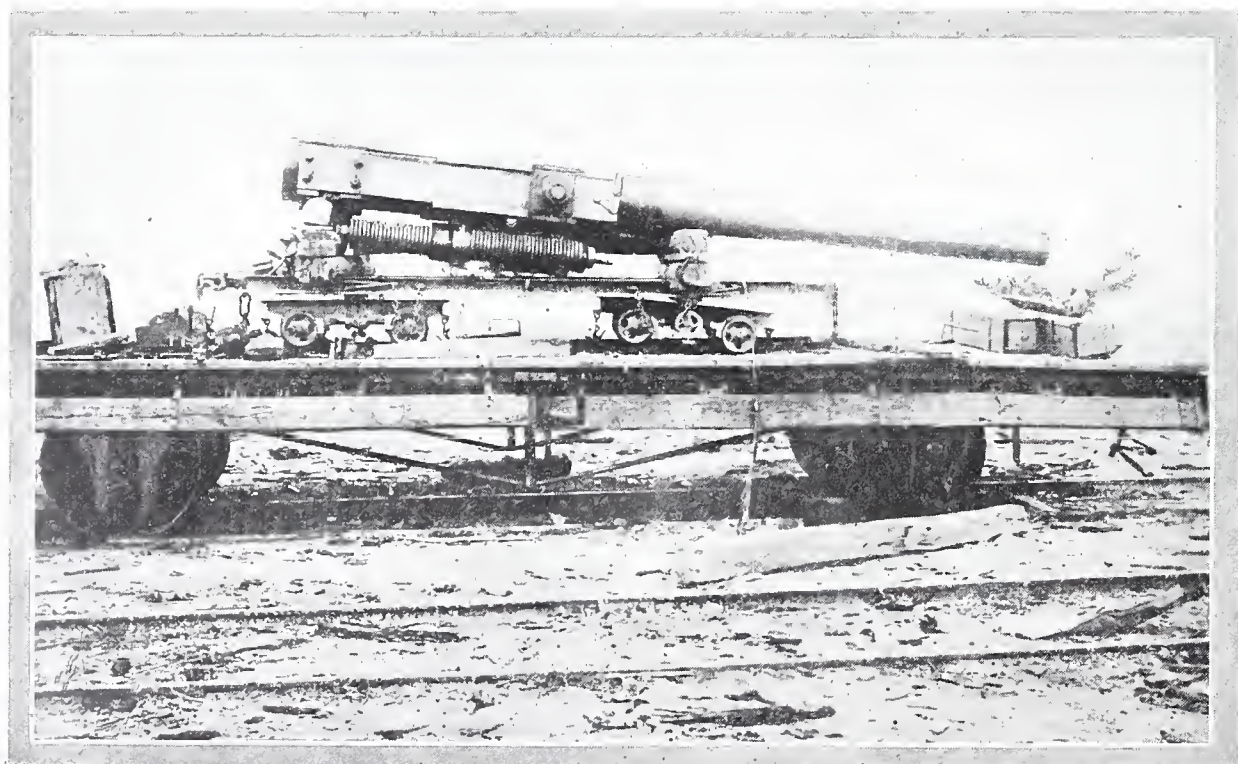
where the Admiral proceeded at once to explain the political changes by means of Orders of the Day and by personal addresses to officers and men. Those officers, including some admirals and captains, who would not submit to the new *régime*, were at once replaced by the Commander-in-Chief himself, whose authority was accepted, being strengthened by his prompt and resolute measures. The sailors of the Black Sea Fleet remained calm and had complete confidence in their officers. They carried unanimous resolutions in support of the Provisional Government, and even sent a deputation to reason with their comrades of the Baltic Fleet.

As regards the influence of the revolution upon the Russian Navy as a whole, the mutinies in the Baltic ports at the outbreak of the rebellion deeply affected the discipline and efficiency of the Fleet. Many of the best and most experienced officers left the Service, and few were sufficiently enthusiastic and zealous to suppress their personal feelings. A strong central authority might have restored the shaken unity of the *personnel*; unfortunately, there was no such authority, even in Petrograd, where the Provisional Government had no real power over the Soviet of Workmen and Soldiers' Delegates. M. Gutchkoff, the Minister for War in the new Cabinet, was a strong man with a patriotic mind

and much common sense. He tried vainly to struggle against the growing demoralization of the fighting Services. The Soviet, led by a minority of Socialist members, insisted on the introduction of extreme democratic methods. Rather than sign an Order of the Day giving so-called political freedom to all ranks and self-government by universal suffrage in matters of discipline, Gutchkoff resigned on May 13.\* The Order giving effect to this measure was issued on May 24. It was drawn up by the Central Soviet of Petrograd, strongly supported from Kronstadt, and was signed by the new War Minister, M. Kerensky. Naval Committees were set up at once in every ship, division and squadron, as well as in every fleet, all questions of discipline, leave, judicial inquiries and courts-martial being submitted to their authority. The following are some of the points in this notorious edict:—

1. All ranks and ratings to enjoy the full rights of citizenship.
2. Every rating to have the right to join any political, national, religious, or professional organisation.
3. Every rating to be permitted openly to profess in speech, writing, or print his political, socialistic, or anarchical opinions.
7. Every rating to be allowed to wear plain dress when off duty.
12. Compulsory saluting by single ratings as well as detachments to be abolished. Mutual greetings between all ranks and ratings to replace the former compulsory salutes.
13. In places outside the areas of naval operations,

\* See Vol. XIII. p. 445.



RUSSIAN NAVAL GUN, CAPTURED BY THE GERMANS, ON ITS WAY TO GERMANY.





**RIGA DEFENCES: HEAVY GUNS AT UST-DVINSK.**

all ratings to be allowed to leave their barracks or ships when off duty, on the condition of having informed their superiors and on being provided with proper identification papers. . . . From ships in open anchorages, such part of the crews to be allowed leave of absence as will not interfere with these ships weighing anchors without loss of time.

14. No rating to be punished without trial. . . .

15. No punishment to be inflicted affecting the honour or self-respect of a rating, his health or physical condition.

18. The rights of inner self-government, of inflicting punishments, etc., to pertain to the elected naval organisations, committees, and courts.\*

After the issue of this decree matters in the Navy went from bad to worse. All authority of the Naval Commanders disappeared. The men in some of the ships were still eager to fight, but the ships themselves were soon in a state of utter deterioration. Officers with any feeling of self-respect left the Service on any pretext. As there were not enough captains, or even commanders, battleships were put under the command of lieutenants proposed by the Central Committees of the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets. The important charge of the Training Division in Kronstadt, comprising the gunnery and torpedo schools, the stokers' and submarine establishments, etc., was confided to a young lieutenant, Lamanoff, the brother of a medical student who had been elected chairman of the Kronstadt Soviet of Workmen and Soldiers' Delegates.

Another decree signed by M. Kerensky on June 25 accelerated the breakdown of the Russian Navy. The backbone of the lower ranks, and a most valuable and essential link between officers and men, were those with long

\* See Vol. XIII., p. 447, for the full text of the "Soldiers' Charter"—the corresponding order issued to the Army.

**SIGNAL STATION AT UST-DVINSK.**

**Destroyed by the Russians before the German landing.**

service, most of them warrant and petty officers. But the seamen as a whole, the majority of whom, of course, were not in this class, insisted through the elected committees upon the equalization in pay and position of these men of higher experience and training with the sailors and petty officers of short compulsory service—i.e., from three to five years. An Order of the Day abolished the grade of warrant officer and took away from all who had acquired them the privileges of long service. Naturally, these men, on whom the efficiency of the Navy so largely depended, lost all confidence in an assured future and desired nothing better than the end of the war in order to leave the Service and escape further humiliation.

After a short visit to the northern bases when offered a naval command in the Baltic, Admiral Koltchak reported to the Provisional Government that the conditions of discipline in the Navy were desperate. The old system had passed away, a new system could not be established on revolutionary principles, and the measures which had been adopted were not likely to succeed in anything but further disorder. General distrust and confusion prevailed in the Navy; all unity between officers and men had disappeared.

In May, 1917, delegates from Kronstadt were

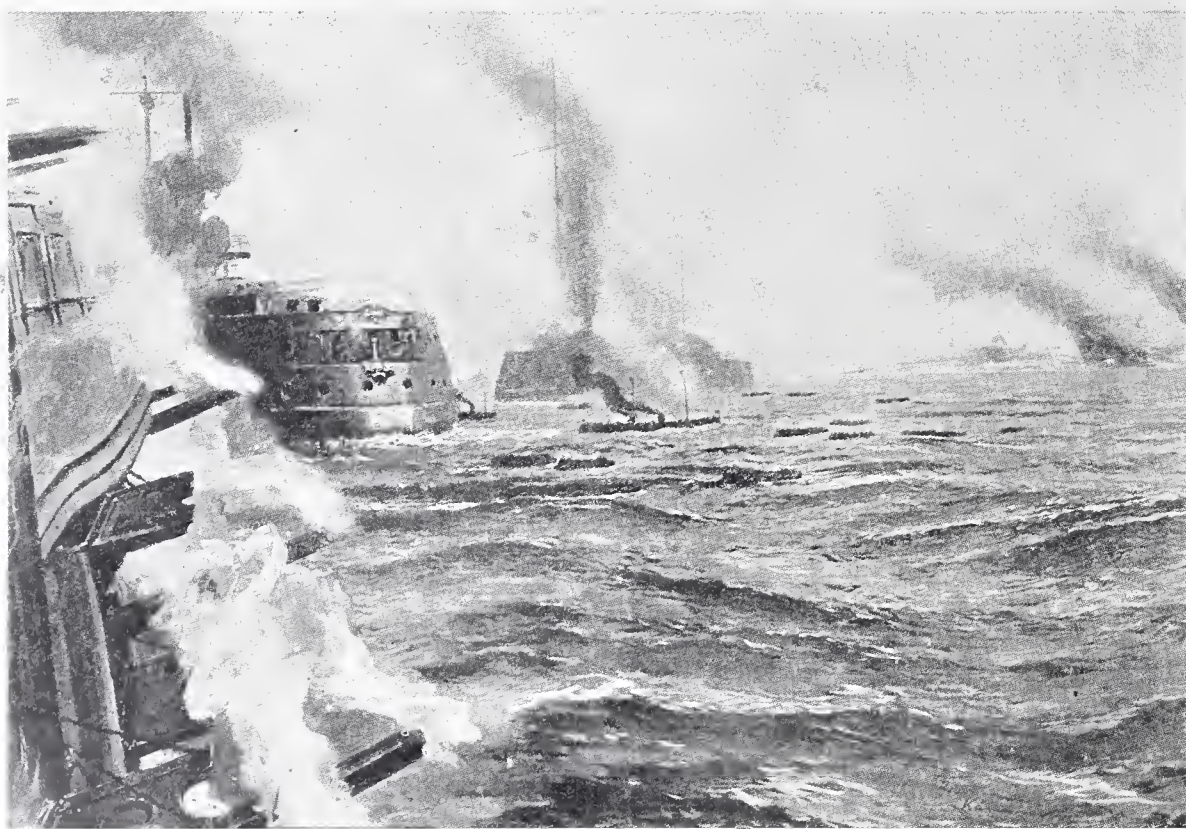


sent to Nikolaieff and Sebastopol to induce their comrades in the Black Sea Fleet to espouse the cause of "Bolshevism." Admiral Koltchak was ordered to allow these men full access to every ship and barrack. He tried vainly to oppose their growing influence by appeals to common sense and patriotism. He and his staff were in consequence very soon accused of counter-revolutionary propaganda. A meeting was held at Sebastopol, attended by thousands of sailors, at which it was resolved to arrest and to search all the officers. The crew of his flagship demanded that the Commander-in-Chief should surrender his sword. The Admiral threw it into the sea.\* He avoided bloodshed by wiring to the officers in all ships not to resist but to give up their arms. He then resigned and was replaced by Rear-Admiral Nemetz, who was forced to make further concessions to men and discipline.

In June and July, when the first armed demonstrations of Bolsheviks took place, in Petrograd, they were strongly supported by sailors from Kronstadt, who were brought in naval barges and tugs up the Neva. The Kronstadt men carried banners with the most seditious inscriptions, such as "Down with Authority," "Long Live the Commune," and so on. On July 16-17, when the first attempt

\* See Vol. XIII., p. 454.

was made to overthrow the Provisional Government by armed force, Kronstadt sailors, led by Sub-Lieutenant Raskolnikoff, occupied for twenty-four hours the Peter and Paul Fortress, and were responsible for most of the street fighting in Petrograd. A few days earlier, when the new Commander-in-Chief of the Baltic Fleet, Admiral Verderevsky, was advised by the Provisional Government to send some of the loyal destroyers for the protection of this fortress against the "Naval Forces of Kronstadt," the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet heard of this order and prevented it from being carried out. A deputation of all the Naval Committees of the Baltic Fleet was sent instead on board the destroyer Orpheus to protest against such "provocative orders." When the Orpheus reached Petrograd the Bolshevik rebellion was already suppressed by Cossacks and loyal troops. The members of the deputation were seized, and orders were sent to some of the most mutinous ships (the battleships *Respublica*, *Petropavlovsk*, and *Slava*) for the arrest of the ringleaders. These orders were not obeyed, nor were they insisted upon by M. Kerensky, who became now the head of the Government. Admiral Verderevsky was summoned to Petrograd, accused of disobedience, and replaced by Captain Rasvo-



[From a German drawing.]

BOMBARDMENT OF OESEL, IN THE GULF OF RIGA, OCTOBER 12, 1917.



zoff. M. Lebedeff, formerly a Lieutenant in the Black Sea Fleet, who had been a political exile at the time of the naval riots of 1906, and had fought bravely during the present war in the French Army, returned to Russia in April, 1917, and was appointed Minister of Marine.\* The new Minister, who had not had much experience in the Navy, but who was a patriotic man, reported to M. Kerensky that a state of "profound disorganization" was characteristic of the whole Russian Fleet, and a fortnight later he resigned, finding the task of restoring discipline hopeless. He was replaced by Admiral Verderevsky, who now entered the new War Cabinet of M. Kerensky. Meanwhile the Germans were already knocking at the Gulf of Riga.

The effect of the Revolution on the defence of Riga Gulf and the Islands was ruinous. No army or navy can be commanded by committees of soldiers and sailors disobeying their officers. The Russian Navy, thoroughly defeated by the Japanese in 1904-5, had been as thoroughly reorganized during the following ten years. By 1914 it had reached a high degree of technical efficiency. Both in the Baltic and in the Black Sea the Russian fleets were able to offer a strenuous opposition to their enemies for nearly three years, until the Revolution came to break the spirit and discipline of the Navy. When discipline fails, the best-trained force is of no account.

In August, 1917, there were many indications of a coming German naval offensive. Enemy airships and seaplanes were scouting over the Riga Gulf and Islands, dropping bombs and gathering information. Little attention was paid to these symptoms, the sailors being much too busy with elections to committees and sub-committees, central and local soviets, discussing principles of freedom and self-government, demanding changes in pay, and striking to get them, demanding that their officers, captains, and admirals should be replaced by officers who enjoyed greater popularity. At the beginning of August special commissaries were sent from Petrograd to the naval bases to control matters of discipline and political controversies between the commanders and seamen. Most of these commissaries were members of the Petrograd Soviet of Workmen and Soldiers' Delegates, who used their confidential position for their own ends. After the

Bolshevist revolt of July 16-17 a military commission was sent by the War Cabinet of M. Kerensky to Kronstadt to investigate the sailors' participation in this outbreak and other excesses. The commissaries were forced by a hostile mob of sailors and soldiers to return to Petrograd without any results. Lenin and Trotsky were favourite guests in Kronstadt, where pacifist propaganda went on infecting



VICE-ADMIRAL ERHARD SCHMIDT,  
"The Conqueror of Oesel Island."

the Navy. The sailors, in short were busy with everything but their duty.

After the fall of Riga on September 2, 1917, the German submarines at once appeared in the Gulf and threw shells on to the coast or attacked the Russian transports. The Russian gunboats and destroyers had remained at the mouth of the Dvina until the last moment in order to convoy the floating defences from Ust-Dvinsk, the port of Riga. During the same month several air raids on Tserel (a 12-inch battery of naval guns on the southernmost promontory of Oesel protecting the western entrance to the Riga Gulf), Arensburg, and other places as far into the Gulf of Finland as Reval, were made by the enemy. The Russian sailors, however, were once more busy with mutinies and executions of their officers who had refused to sign a pledge of fidelity to the Revolution when General Korniloff made his attempt to wrest the supreme power from the weak hands of a tottering Government. All the officers in Finland ashore and afloat were called upon to sign this document, which was issued at Helsingfors by a general assembly of the democratic bodies, including most of the ships' committees. The naval command

\* See Vol. XIV., p. 36.

had not been instructed from Headquarters soon enough to prevent misapprehension, and the result was disastrous. In several of the ships officers were arrested, and four belonging to the battleship *Petropavlovsk* were shot on her deck, and many others were killed at Viborg, their bodies being mutilated and thrown into the sea.

Such were the conditions in the Baltic at

the enemy trawlers were busy sweeping the Irben Channel. On October 12 numerous transports, supported by a strong German squadron, appeared off the western side of the islands. The Russian coast batteries on Oesel and Dagö succeeded in sinking a few of the enemy small craft, but were soon silenced by the long-range naval guns when the German battleships closed in on the coast. One



THE RUSSIAN BATTLESHIP SLAVA.

the beginning of October, 1917, when the German operations around the Gulf of Riga developed on a much larger scale than before. Air scouting had been carried out during the whole of September. Submarines were busy placing mines, by one of which the Russian destroyer *Ochotnik* was damaged off Tserel and sunk, all the officers going down in the vessel. On October 1 the enemy trawlers and minesweepers supported by destroyers appeared in the entrance of the Gulf, and bombs were dropped by the enemy aircraft on the land batteries. Some eighty men of the naval garrison were killed in trying to save the munition depot. They were replaced by sailors from Kronstadt who were less eager to fight than to pass resolutions. Meanwhile, despite the efforts of the Russian destroyers,

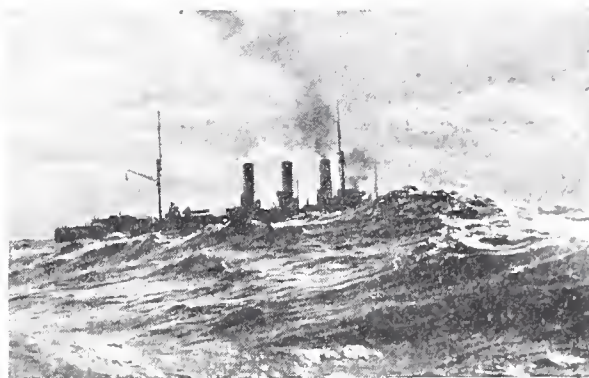
enemy cruiser ran aground, and a battleship was damaged by a mine, but these losses did not check the landing of the invaders from tugs and trawlers. Three battalions were disembarked at Tagga Bay, on the northern coast of Oesel, and one battalion near Serro, on the southern coast of Dagö. At the same time the naval batteries of Tserel were heavily bombarded by enemy Dreadnoughts, as many as eight of which vessels as well as 12 large cruisers, 40 destroyers, and a large number of minesweepers were reported to be engaged in the operation. The minefields and naval 6-inch batteries on the Islands of Oesel and Dagö proved incapable of resistance to the strong naval forces employed by the enemy. The garrison of these islands consisted of one military division and some small



detachments of sailors with naval guns, but, demoralized by the Revolution, neither soldiers nor sailors fought as they would have done a year before. During October 13-14 the landing of German troops on Oesel continued, the enemy at the same time pushing southward to Arensburg and eastward to the Moon Sound. A Russian flotilla of two gunboats, the *Khrabry* and *Khivinetz*, with four destroyers, the *Grom*, *Zabiaka*, *Pobeditel* and *Constantin*, made a gallant stand against much superior enemy forces in the shallow channel of Soëlo Sound (between Oesel and Dagö). On October 15 the occupation of Oesel was completed, and the naval battery of Tserel was the only part of the island to continue resistance. Even there the 12-inch batteries could not stand the hammering of the enemy's battleships for long. The surrender on October 16 was accelerated by a mutiny of the garrison after the commander and some other officers had been wounded.

Meanwhile minesweepers had cleared the Irben Channel, and on the night of October 16 advanced forces of the enemy penetrated the Gulf. The Russian patrols were thrust back towards the Moon Sound and the small islands Runo and Kyno were occupied by enemy detachments. On the 18th a strong German squadron, consisting of battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and auxiliary craft, entered the Gulf. The Russian defence forces in the Gulf consisted of two old battleships, the *Grajdantin* (formerly *Tsarevitch*) and the *Slava*, the armoured cruiser *Bayan*, and eight destroyers, under the command of Vice-Admiral Bakhireff. With these ships the Admiral tried to make a stand off the southern entrance to Moon Sound,

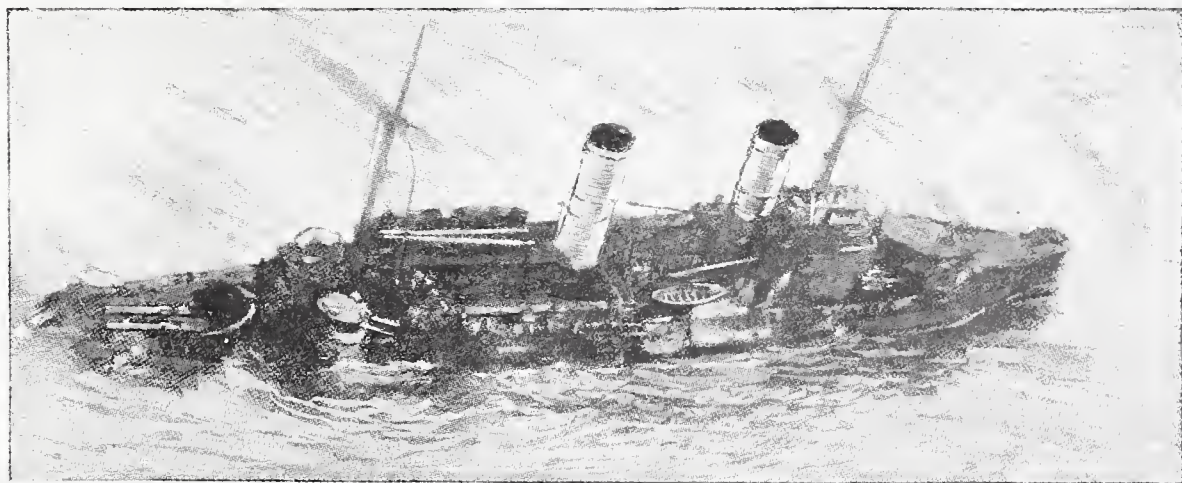
but the relative strength of the opposed forces made the result a foregone conclusion. The Russian guns were outranged by those of the enemy, some of his battleships being Dreadnoughts of the Heligoland type. The *Slava* was badly hit and had to be abandoned, being sunk



THE RUSSIAN CRUISER AURORA.

in the Moon Sound to block the southern entrance. The *Grajdantin*, the *Bayan*, and most of the small craft succeeded in making their escape into the Gulf of Finland. The evacuation of the Riga Gulf was complete by October 19, when all the Estonian Islands were already in German occupation, and some of the enemy destroyers had penetrated the Kassari Bay, through the Soëlo Sound, the direct entrance from the west to Moon Sound. Such success as attended the withdrawal of the remaining ships, difficult in the prevailing conditions, and the stubbornness of the defence must be placed to the credit of Admiral Bakhireff, a gallant officer of commendable initiative, energy, and resource.

The loss of the Riga Gulf resulted from the enemy superiority at sea and the lack of discipline in the Russian naval and military forces.



THE WRECK OF THE SLAVA IN MOON SOUND.

The bulk of the Baltic Fleet did not make any attempt to interfere with the enemy, to oppose his landing, or even to effect a diversion. A couple of old battleships with some destroyers and gunboats could not withstand the formidable array led by Admiral Schmidt. The sacrifices made in the two naval engagements were a tribute to the patriotism of this small division, but could hardly influence the course of events. In the operations, which extended over 20 days, the Germans lost from six to ten destroyers, minesweepers, and transports, while two battleships and one cruiser were damaged. The Russian losses included the battleship *Slava*, the destroyer *Grom*, and a couple of transports. But the Moon Sound and the Esthonian Islands had a great strategic value, and their loss with that of the command in the Gulf was an event of vital importance, ensuring much wider liberty of movement to the German Fleet, as well as obliging a further retreat of the Russian Army. Soon after the naval operations in the Baltic ceased, owing partly to the weather conditions, but in a measure also to the changing political situation in Russia.

A significant part was played by the Baltic sailors in the Bolshevik revolt of November 8-10, 1917, when the cruiser *Aurora* entered the Neva and shelled the stronghold of the Provisional Government at the Winter Palace, and a mob of Kronstadt sailors supported the rising of the Petrograd garrison. Armed with machine-guns from the ships and depôts, some of these naval detachments were better organized than most of the Petrograd military forces; unfortunately their revolutionary enthusiasm was mainly directed to destructive purposes. About this date many ships were abandoned by large proportions of their crews, and the few officers who remained on board had no authority whatever. Moreover, the Bolshevik access to power manifested itself by new excesses in the Navy. Most of the disturbance occurred in the Black Sea Fleet. Upwards of 200 naval officers were reported killed, many as acts of personal vengeance or for alleged counter-

revolutionary feelings. On January 9-10, during the Russian Christmas holidays, some 60 officers were killed at Sebastopol, including four admirals. Most of these officers had served on the different committees which held enquiries into the sailors' mutinies of 1906 and the activity of the revolutionary sailors' societies in 1912. Their membership was now brought against them as a crime by the Bolshevik authority and supported by the evidence of individual sailors. Without any trial the victims were arrested and shot, most of them experienced officers who enjoyed the confidence of their superiors and merited that of the sailors themselves. On January 25, 1918, a decree was issued which had been drawn up by a Bolshevik all-Russian naval conference at Petrograd. It aimed at the further democratisation of the Russian Navy, which was now transformed into a voluntary service with a new uniform and a new flag. All sailors were to be allowed equal rights, the highest authority to be represented by a strategic and technical section of the Government working in conjunction with committees selected by the administrative section of the Navy, while the entire executive *personnel* was to be elected by universal suffrage, the appointments being subject to confirmation by a central naval committee. As a result the greater part of the Admiralty staff resigned, the officers and officials being in many instances replaced by petty officers and seamen. The last Naval Minister of M. Kerensky's War Cabinet, Admiral Verderevsky, with many senior officers, was arrested and imprisoned. A seaman named Dybienko was made "Commissary for the Navy." Naturally the Fleet was not in a condition to display more activity under the Bolsheviks than it had in the time of their predecessors. By the spring of 1918 Kronstadt and Petrograd were the only Baltic ports which remained to Russia, and even these two bases were threatened. In the Black Sea, Sebastopol, Nikolaieff, and other naval centres with many of the ships had passed into German hands.





## CHAPTER CCXLIV.

# AMERICA'S FIRST YEAR AT WAR.

PROMISE AND PREPARATION—CHARACTER OF AMERICAN INTERVENTION AND PRESIDENT WILSON'S POLICY—THE AMERICAN "PROGRAMME"—WAR WITH AUSTRIA—SKETCH OF WAR ORGANIZATION—FOOD FOR THE ALLIES—FINANCE—THE TRADE WAR—THE NAVY—AIRCRAFT—MUNITIONS—SHIPPING—RAILWAY DIFFICULTIES—LABOUR AND LABOUR UNREST—LOAN OF AMERICAN TROOPS TO FRENCH AND BRITISH ARMIES—DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC OPINION—MISSIONS TO AMERICA—THE BREAK OF DAWN.

**T**HE first year of warfare between the United States and Germany ended on April 6, 1918. For the purpose of this history it is more convenient and more fair to prolong the year by a couple of months.

During the late winter of 1917 and the spring of 1918 the position of the United States in the war was to many Americans not altogether satisfactory. At the beginning of April Hindenburg's first great effort for Amiens and the Channel ports was in full swing, and chagrin that the United States was still unable to play any real part in what was widely felt to be the opening of the most important campaign in history fanned the spark of dissatisfaction.

Both in the Press and in Congress there were signs of uneasiness that the American giant was not living up to the promises he had made to the Allies during the early months of the war. In the Press, scandal had begun to raise its head. In Congress, various motions and speeches demanding investigations into the working of the Government's war-machinery were beginning to attract the serious attention of President Wilson and his advisers. Where, it was asked, were the 6,000,000 tons of shipping that it had promised Mr. Balfour's Mission in 1917 would be ready before the end of 1918? Where were the thousands of aircraft that

nine months earlier the American people had been assured would be in France during 1918 and for which the enormous sum of \$640,000,000 had been voted? Where were all the divisions of American troops which it had been hoped that the spring would see in France, all equipped and ready to share with the Allies the brunt of the fighting?

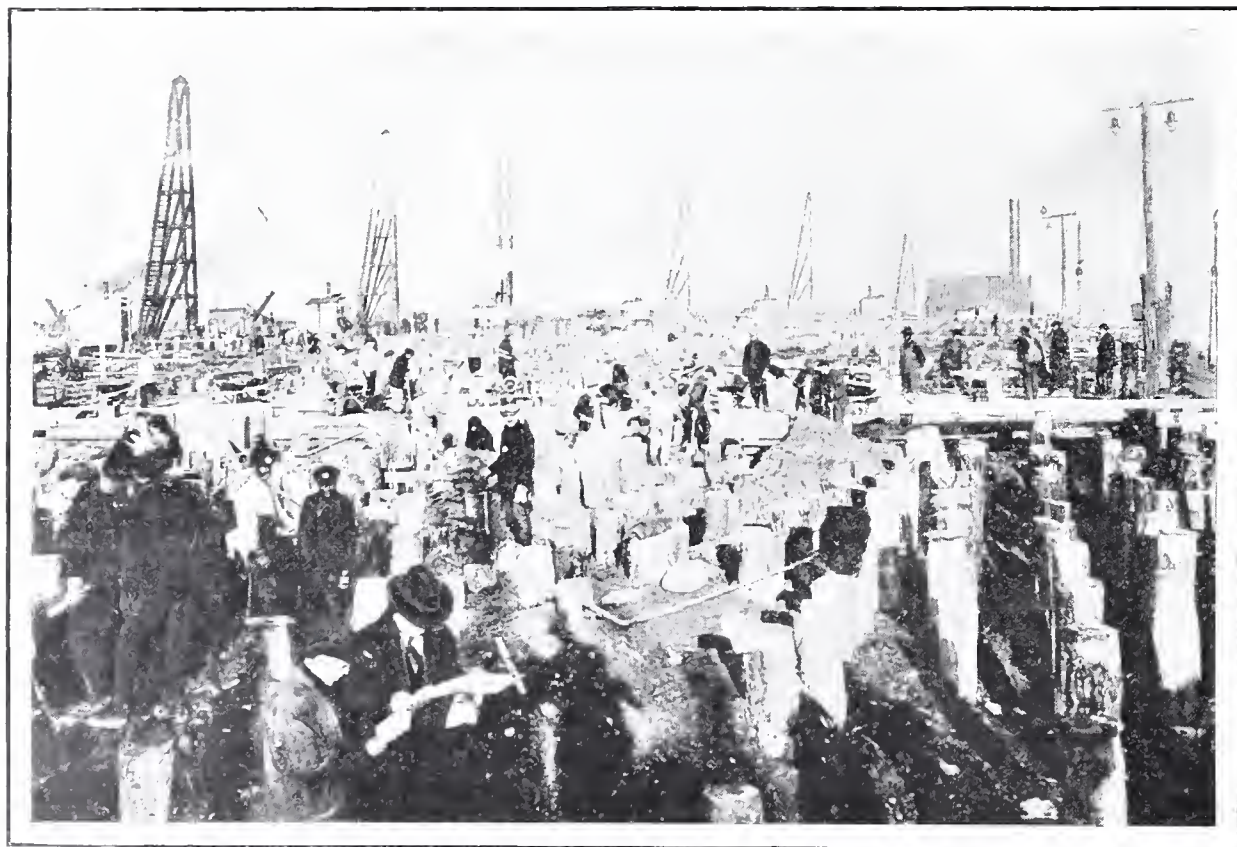
It was forgotten that many of these promises had been the children of the over-sanguine enthusiasm with which during the first phase of America's belligerency many newspaper writers and some public men had plunged themselves into the business of beating the Germans. There was a tendency to forget the immense amount of spade-work, with its inevitable mistakes and false starts, that attends the inauguration of such a gigantic business as the preparation for modern war of a peace-loving, individualistic democracy a hundred millions strong. Too little attention was paid to the great positive aid that the United States had already been to the Allies on the economic and naval sides of the war, to the work of the American Fleet in European waters, to the great sums of money that had been raised to be lent to the Allies so that they might continue to draw from the United States the vast stores of foodstuffs and munitions without which they would have been hard put to it to continue the conflict, and to the whole-hearted participation

of the President in the British blockade. Too little weight was given to the value of the political leadership which President Wilson had been gradually assuming over the peoples of the Liberal Powers.

There was also at the beginning of 1918 a certain anxiety as to the temper of the nation. It was not that there were serious signs of any desire for peace. There was no inclination among real Americans to compromise with the Prussian menace. There were, of course, pacifists. The German propaganda was as active as and, because covert, even more sinister than it had been in the days of American neutrality. But, when it came to trying to stop the war, neither Prussianism nor pacifism ever got farther than ineffectual hole-in-the-corner intrigues and provincial cabals. If there was no fear of people thinking that the war need not be won, there was on the other hand some fear that they still believed that it might be more easily and sooner won than was ever possible and that this idea might react upon the national effort. To those who lived through the early years of the contest in Great Britain the existence of this idea needs no palliation. It would be scarcely worth recording had not its collapse accentuated the change

that came over the situation in April and May, 1918.

That change was spectacular, even for a people so quick to think and act as the Americans. On March 30 there were comparatively few fighting American troops in France—scarcely enough to offset the casualties produced by a few weeks' hard fighting in the Allied forces. They were being added to slowly, almost in a routine way. By May 31 the war zone of France swarmed with Americans, and in the beginning of June they were reported to have taken part in the great battle raging between Soissons and the Marne. On March 31 both the shipping and the aircraft programme seemed to have been thrown hopelessly into arrears. Both were beset by scandal and criticism and the future was obscure. By May 31 ships were being launched at a better rate, and things had happened to prove that the aircraft programme had begun to exist in reality as well as on paper. On March 31 it was still said by competent observers that the American people did not understand the war. By May 31 the lie had been given to this statement by a third large war loan subscribed to by nearly a quarter of the white population—that is to say, by four times as many as took



[Committee of Public Information, N.Y.]

UNITED STATES' SHIPBUILDING EFFORT: DRIVING PILES FOR THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE NEW SHIPYARD AT HOG ISLAND, FEBRUARY, 1918.

For the building of steel ships.





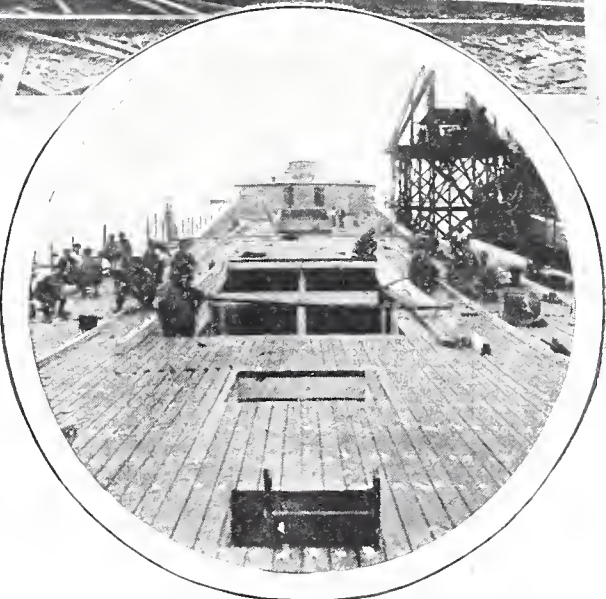
UNITED STATES' SHIPBUILDING EFFORT:  
THE LARGEST WOODEN SHIP EVER  
BUILT.

Launched at Orange, Texas, in 1918.

up the first issue ten months previously—and by other and convincing signs that the great majority of the population was becoming committed to the winning of the war at any cost that might be demanded. As regards the remarkable acceleration in the despatch of troops to France, President Wilson was able on July 2, 1918, to publish a letter from Mr. Baker, Secretary of War, reporting that over 1,000,000 American soldiers had then been sent. Mr. Baker said :

More than one million American soldiers have sailed from the ports in this country to participate in the war in France. In reporting this fact to you I feel that you will be interested in a few data showing the progress of our oversea military effort. The first ship carrying military *personnel* sailed on May 8, 1917, having on board Base Hospital No. 4 and members of the Reserve Nurses Force. General Pershing and his staff sailed on May 20, 1917. The embarkations in the months from May, 1917, to and including June, 1918, are as follows :

1917.				
May	...	...	...	1,718
June	...	...	...	12,261
July	...	...	...	12,988
August	...	...	...	18,323
September	...	...	...	32,523
October	...	...	...	38,259
November	...	...	...	23,016
December...	...	...	...	48,840



CAULKING THE UPPER DECK.

1918.				
January	...	...	...	46,776
February	...	...	...	48,027
March	...	...	...	83,811
April	...	...	...	117,212
May	...	...	...	244,345
June	...	...	...	276,372
Marines	...	...	...	14,644
Total	...	...	...	1,019,115

The total number of troops returned from abroad, lost at sea, and casualties is 8,165. Of these, by reason of the superbly efficient protection which the Navy has given to our transport system, only 291 have been lost at sea. The supplies and equipment in France for all the troops sent are, by the latest report, adequate, and the output of our war industries in this country is showing marked improvement in practically all lines of necessary equipment and supplies.

The fighting in France and Flanders had



revealed a Germany still solidly behind the ambitions of her rulers and still possessed of an army as effective as, and numerically even stronger than, the armies of France and Great Britain. The military crisis had come at precisely the right moment for the United States to be able to respond to it by sudden and effective endeavour. It came just when the preparations that had been made were showing their first fruits, when both in a military and an industrial sense the plants that had been

trial or military skill would have qualified the United States for the strain of real participation in the war without the most careful, constructive and, it must be added, receptive leadership. In August, 1914, the American people were still faithful to the tradition which George Washington had made cardinal in his external relations during the early years of the Republic. It was the duty of the United States to herself and to the civilization which she represented to remain aloof from



LAYING THE KEEL OF THE FIRST OF THE FLEET OF 5,000-TON STEEL FREIGHTERS FOR THE U.S.A. SHIPPING BOARD.

building were getting ready to produce, and after the minds of the people had been carefully educated to realise what defeat would mean. Even without the stimulus of Hindenburg's offensive there can be little doubt that during the ensuing summer the war Government would have confounded its critics of the winter of 1917-18. The difference would have been that without this stimulus the change might have been slower.

The first year of the United States at war, regarded as one of preparation, was as successful as history has any right to expect it to have been. This was especially so from the political point of view. No amount of indus-

the diplomacy and wars of Europe. Secure behind her ocean, she was to offer to the oppressed of other nations a haven of democratic equality, and to a war-weakened world a reservoir of unimpaired resources and healing ideals. This conception of the mission of the United States underlay the President's policy of neutrality. It is woven into his State papers of that period. His faithfulness to it kept the United States neutral when by the Lusitania and other submarine atrocities Germany proved that it was not only the peaceful uses of modern science that had turned the oceans into frontier rivers and made of the nations of the world a single community.



The faithfulness of the mass of his countrymen to it secured his re-election to the Presidency as late as November, 1916, on a platform of peace and benignant prosperity as against war and futile confusion.

The reasons why, four months later, a recrudescence of Prussian submarine lawlessness caused Mr. Wilson to join the Allies have already been told. History can produce few greater examples of persuasive leadership than the way he brought home the moral duties of war to a country which had just elected him to keep the peace, and then in a few weeks committed it to conscription and to wholesale financial and naval cooperation with the Allies. That triumph was only the beginning of his task. The harder part of it was still before him. The patriotism of Congress and its constituents enabled the President to sweep aside the pacifism and financial parochialism with which a century of cloistered seclusion, broken only by civil war and an easy colonial war, had imbued his countrymen; but it was clear that it would take something more than patriotism in the accepted sense of the word to enable him to make of the United States the power for world decency which he was determined to organize. To the patriotism of his countrymen had to be added a clear-sighted appreciation of the wider and darker implications of the war. It had to be explained to a nation ignorant of European politics that Germans in Baghdad might be as bad for the future of civilization as Germans in Brussels, and that a decent peace might depend as much upon the realisation of the aspirations of the Slav as upon the liberation of Alsace and Lorraine.

Mr. Wilson set about his task with a vigour which secured for him an even more valuable reward than the successful education of his countrymen. Never for a moment during the dark days of the Russian collapse and of the Brest-Litovsk fiascos did he waver. Never were the aims of allied civilization more clearly defined than they were in the speeches in which the President reinforced Mr. Lloyd George's refusal (January 5, 1918) to be beguiled by the peace talk of Count Czernin and Count Hertling. Speaking before Congress on January 8, while the Brest-Litovsk negotiations were in progress, the President mapped out the "only possible programme" for world peace in the following 14 paragraphs:—

I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after

which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic



PRESIDENT WILSON AT HIS DESK IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

V. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the Government whose title is to be determined.

VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest co-operation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of the comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another.



BOYS OF PELHAM BAY NAVAL STATION IN TRAINING.

Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is for ever impaired.

VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognisable lines of nationality.

X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

XI. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan States to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan States should be entered into.

XII. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

XIII. An independent Polish State should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike.

In regard to these essential rectifications of wrong and assertions of right we feel ourselves to be intimate partners of all the governments and peoples associated together against the Imperialists. We cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We stand together until the end.

These terms elicited replies, notorious for

the feebleness of their insincerity, both from Count Hertling and from Count Czernin. On February 11 the President closed the debate by adding four more general paragraphs to the 14 points of his previous speech:—

1. Each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case and upon such adjustments as are more likely to bring a peace that will be permanent.

2. The peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now for ever discredited, of the balance of power; but that

3. Every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as a part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims among rival states; and

4. That all well-defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe and consequently of the world.

The Teutonic ideas of a peace settlement were, the President said, still those of the Congress of Vienna. "What we are striving for is a new international order based upon broad universal principles of right and justice—no mere peace of shreds and patches. Is it possible that Count Hertling does not see that, does not grasp it, is in fact living in his thoughts in a world dead and gone?"

By his efforts to educate his countrymen regarding the policies whereby Germany hoped to defeat his programme for world settlement the President rendered to the Allies a scarcely less valuable service. One of the most sinister developments in 1917 and 1918 was the steady



reaching out of Germany towards the East. It was clear to students of European politics that Germany was quietly stretching the second string to her bow of world-domination; that she was preparing at the worst to relinquish her gains and aspirations in the West and to recoup herself in the East. It was clear that if she could succeed in capitalizing the disruption of Russia and the consequent collapse of Rumania, and in adding the result to what she had already gained, she would have an almost unlimited reservoir of men and material for the prosecution of another war and perhaps for the indefinite continuation of the present war. As said above, in the United States even more than in Great Britain, study of international politics was, even after the war, the occupation of a very small minority. There was a real danger that a German offer to evacuate and rehabilitate France and Belgium, spiced by lip service to the cause of domestic democratic reform after the manner of Abdul Hamid, would produce a strong demand for peace and for the subsequent settlement of the Eastern problem in a Congress where the Allies would be the prey of divided councils and where the Central Powers and their satellites would move as one man.

The President saw this danger from the

first. In his Flag Day address of June 14, 1917, he said of the rulers of modern Germany:

These men have never regarded nations as peoples, men, women, and children of like blood and frame as themselves, for whom governments existed and in whom governments had their life. They have regarded them merely as serviceable organizations which they could by force or intrigue bend or corrupt to their own purpose. They have regarded the smaller states, in particular, and the peoples who could be overwhelmed by force as their natural tools and instruments of domination. Their purpose has long been avowed. The statesmen of other nations, to whom that purpose was incredible, paid little attention; regarded what German professors expounded in their classrooms and German writers set forth to the world as the goal of German policy as rather the dream of minds detached from practical affairs, as preposterous private conceptions of German destiny, than as the actual plans of responsible rulers; but the rulers of Germany themselves knew all the while what concrete plans, what well-advanced intrigues lay back of what the professors and the writers were saying, and were glad to go forward unmolested, filling the thrones of Balkan States with German princes, putting German officers at the service of Turkey to drill her armies and make interest with her government, developing plans of sedition and rebellion in India and Egypt, setting their fires in Persia. The demands made by Austria upon Serbia were a mere single step in a plan which compassed Europe and Asia, from Berlin to Baghdad. They hoped those demands might not rouse Europe, but they meant to press them whether they did or not, for they thought themselves ready for the final issue of arms.

Their plan was to throw a broad belt of German military power and political control across the very centre of Europe and beyond the Mediterranean into the heart of Asia; and Austria-Hungary was to be as much



CHICAGO'S FIRST DRAFT MARCHING DOWN MICHIGAN AVENUE.



their tool and pawn as Serbia or Bulgaria or Turkey or the ponderous states of the East. Austria-Hungary, indeed, was to become part of the central German Empire absorbed and dominated by the same forces and influences that had originally cemented the German States themselves. The dream had its heart at Berlin. It could have had a heart nowhere else! It rejected the idea of solidarity of race entirely. The choice of peoples played no part in it at all. It contemplated binding together racial and political units which could be kept together only by force—Czechs, Magyars, Croats, Serbs, Rumanians, Turks, Armenians—the proud States of Bohemia and Hungary, the stout little commonwealths of the Balkans, the indomitable Turks, the subtle peoples of the East. Those peoples did not wish to be united. They ardently desired to direct their own affairs, would be satisfied only by undisputed independence. They could be kept quiet only by the presence or the constant threat of armed men. They would live under a common power only by sheer compulsion and await the day of revolution. But the German military statesmen had reckoned with all that and were ready to deal with it in their own way.

And they have actually carried the greater part of that amazing plan into execution! Look how things stand. Austria is at their mercy. It has acted, not upon its own initiative or upon the choice of its own people but at Berlin's dictation ever since the war began. Its people now desire peace, but cannot have it until leave is granted from Berlin. The so-called Central Powers are in fact but a single Power. Serbia is at its mercy, should its hands be but for a moment freed. Bulgaria has consented to its will, and Rumania is overrun. The Turkish armies, which Germans trained, are serving Germany, certainly not themselves, and the guns of German warships lying in the harbour at Constantinople remind Turkish statesmen every day that they have no choice but to take their orders from Berlin. From Hamburg to the Persian Gulf the net is spread.

Is it not easy to understand the eagerness for peace that has been manifested from Berlin ever since the snare was set and sprung?

Again, before the American Federation of Labour, November 12, 1917:

I suppose very few of you have thought much about the Berlin-to-Baghdad Railway. The Berlin-Baghdad Railway was constructed in order to run the threat of force down the flank of the industrial undertakings of half a dozen other countries; so that when the German competition came in it would not be resisted too far, because there was always the possibility of getting German armies into the heart of that country quicker than any other armies could be got there.

Look at the map of Europe now! Germany is thrusting upon us again and again the discussion of peace talks about what? Talks about Belgium; talks about northern France; talks about Alsace-Lorraine. Well, those are deeply interesting subjects to us and to them, but they are not talking about the heart of the matter. Take the map and look at it. Germany has absolute control of Austria-Hungary, practical control of the Balkan States, control of Turkey, control of Asia Minor. I saw a map in which the whole thing was printed in appropriate black the other day, and the black stretched all the way from Hamburg to Baghdad—the bulk of German power inserted into the heart of the world. If she can keep that, she has kept all that her dreams contemplated when the war began.

The President's Russian policy showed from the beginning the same grasp of the importance of the Eastern problem. As was recorded in an earlier chapter of this history, one of his first acts after the United States

entered the war, and after the deposition of the Czar, was to send to the Kerensky Government a mission headed by Mr. Root, the political strength of which was reinforced by a strong delegation of American railway and business men who it was then hoped might help to reconstitute industrial Russia. After the fall of the Kerensky Government the President's faith in the Russian Revolution remained unimpaired. Brest-Litovsk failed to shake his conviction that Russian democracy would find itself and rid the country of the nightmares inflicted upon it by the ineptitude of the foreign policy of Lenin and Trotsky and the weakness of their Government.

But Mr. Wilson's Russian policy does not properly belong to this chapter. At the end of the period with which it deals the affairs of Russia, from Manchuria to the Ukraine, were still withdrawn behind an impenetrable veil of contradiction and rumour, save so far as the consistent ruthlessness of Germany's Russian policy was concerned.

More pertinent is the cognate question why, if he was so deeply impressed with the dangers of German penetration into the East, did the President not declare war upon Austria-Hungary until December, 1917, and why it was that the United States was still officially at peace with Turkey and Bulgaria in the summer of 1918. The continuation of peace with Turkey and Bulgaria was of no particular importance. It had no practical bearing upon the war save in so far as it rendered it impossible for Washington to join London, Paris, and Rome in their declarations in favour of the establishment of an independent Jewish community in Palestine, and rendered more difficult the recruiting under the auspices of the Zionists of Jewish-American contingents for Palestine. There were, on the other hand, humanitarian arguments for a continuance of relations with the Porte in the shape of the continued activities of American missionaries and philanthropists in Turkey in Asia. Save for an occasional rather half-hearted newspaper controversy between the missionary element and the stalwarts, the question attracted but little attention.

The reason why war was so long in following diplomatic rupture with Vienna is, on the other hand, important.

About the ends for which the United States was fighting there was from the first firm popular agreement. The President's outlines



of possible peace terms, given above, were as enthusiastically received as the actual declaration of war. About the means to that end there was during the first year of belligerency less consistency. There can be little doubt but that the President's reluctance to declare war on Austria was due to his hope that the Teutonic peoples were growing tired of the soulless tyranny of the potentates of Berlin. There seemed to be ideas at Washington and in the

ambitious men who were accustomed to use their fellow men as pawns and tools. Self-governed nations do not fill their neighbour states with spies or set the course of intrigue to bring about some critical posture of affairs which will give them an opportunity to strike and make conquest.

In his Flag Day address, June 14, 1917, he said :

We know now as clearly as we knew before we were ourselves engaged that we are not the enemies of the German people and that they are not our enemies. They did not originate or desire this hideous war or



#### THE AMERICAN MISSION AT RUSSIAN HEADQUARTERS IN PETROGRAD.

Senator Root in the centre, between General Brusiloff (with cross on breast) and General Scott.

country that a continuance of relations with Vienna might afford at no hopelessly distant date an entry for a wedge between Austria-Hungary and Germany and between the Teutonic people and Prussian junkerdom. In his earlier utterances on the war the President reiterated the statement that the United States was not at war with the German people. In his great war address to Congress (April 2, 1917) he said :

We have no quarrel with the German people. We have no feeling toward them but one of sympathy and friendship. It was not upon their impulse that their Government acted in entering this war. It was not with their previous knowledge or approval. It was a war determined upon as wars used to be determined upon in the old, unhappy days when peoples were nowhere consulted by their rulers and wars were provoked and waged in the interest of dynasties or of little groups of

wish that we should be drawn into it; and we are vaguely conscious that we are fighting their cause, as they will some day see it, as well as our own. They are themselves in the grip of the same sinister power that has now at last stretched its ugly talons out and drawn blood from us. The whole world is at war because the whole world is in the grip of that power and is trying out the great battle which shall determine whether it is to be brought under its mastery or fling itself free.

Regarding Austria-Hungary, disappointed hopes of better things stand clearly revealed in his address to Congress December 4, 1917, in which he asked for a declaration of war upon the Dual Empire :

One very embarrassing obstacle that stands in our way is that we are at war with Germany, but not with her allies. I therefore earnestly recommend that the Congress immediately declare the United States in a state of war with Austria-Hungary. Does it seem strange to you that this should be the conclusion of the argument I have just addressed to you? It is not





BATTLESHIPS AND DESTROYERS IN THE BROOKLYN NAVY YARD.

It is, in fact, the inevitable logic of what I have said. Austria-Hungary is for the time being not her own mistress, but simply the vassal of the German Government. We must face the facts as they are and act upon them without sentiment in this stern business. The Government of Austria-Hungary is not acting upon its own initiative or in response to the wishes and feelings of its own peoples, but as the instrument of another nation. We must meet its force with our own and regard the Central Powers as but one. The war can be successfully conducted in no other way. The same logic would lead also to a declaration of war against Turkey and Bulgaria. They also are the tools of Germany. But they are mere tools and do not yet stand in the direct path of our necessary action.

Even after the declaration of war upon Austria there were signs, or what by the friends of oppressed races of Austria-Hungary were held to be signs, that despite his reference in his peace programme of January 8 to his desire that "the peoples of Austria-Hungary should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development," the President was still prepared to concede something to Vienna and Budapest, if they could thereby be coaxed from the war. It was not until May 29, 1918, that all doubt of the President's "orthodoxy" in regard to the racial questions of Austria and Hungary was finally set at rest by an official *communiqué* from the State Department that "the Secretary of State desires to announce that the proceedings of the Congress of Oppressed Races of Austria-

Hungary, which was held at Rome in April, have been followed with great interest by the Government of the United States, and that the nationalistic aspirations of the Czecho-Slovaks and the Jugo-Slavs for freedom have the earnest sympathy of this Government."

The interpretation generally placed upon the statement in the United States was that the President had lost the last shred of hope that Vienna could be detached from Berlin and hence the last shred of reason for not speaking his thoughts upon the question of the oppressed nationalities of the Dual Monarchy. Almost on the next day this judgment was strengthened by the publication of some details of the pact by which a few weeks earlier Berlin had bound Vienna still tighter to the chariot wheels of her military despotism.

There is no reason to believe that the President ever hoped that the defences of Teutonic autocracy would collapse offhand before the trumpet call of trans-Atlantic Democracy. He probably regarded his political attacks upon the solidarity of the German Government and the German people and of the Central Powers as a useful complement to the armed attacks of the Allies. But his critics averred that his attitude encouraged among the American masses an idea that the war might



perhaps end as suddenly as it had begun, and that, therefore, they might not be called upon for supreme efforts or supreme sacrifices.

Such delusions crumpled like a house of cards before the repeated reverberations of the German spring offensive of 1918, and before things like the repudiation by the Austrian Emperor of the famous Sixtus letter, Prince Lichnowsky's public indictment of his Government's responsibility for the war, the new Austro-German agreement mentioned above, and the cumulative evidence of the barbarous and cynical duplicity of German political methods afforded by her treatment of Russia after the Brest-Litovsk negotiations.

"Force, force without stint or limit," cried the President in a speech at Baltimore (April 6) while Hindenburg was hammering at the gates of Amiens. "I have heard gentlemen say that we must get 5,000,000 men ready—why limit it to 5,000,000 men?" he said six weeks later (May 17) at New York in a speech mainly devoted to the exposure of the obvious artificiality of all the peace baits that the Central Powers had put out up to that moment. The second utterance was received with almost religious enthusiasm from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Everywhere it was proclaimed that

peace and security would only be possible when the Prussian dragon was killed, and that to allow it to retreat into its lair, wounded but with booty to its credit, would merely mean its subsequent reappearance and more carnage.

The effect of the dramatic education of trans-Atlantic opinion in regard to the strength of the Prussian menace had, as was recorded at the outset of the chapter, an influence upon war preparations in the United States which made old history of much that had happened during the previous year. It enabled the Government to initiate controversial policies and to ask for sacrifices that might at an earlier date have caused restlessness. It was realised that Germany could not be made to "crack" without tremendous efforts on the part of the United States as well as of the Allies, if for no other reason than because the German people were still the willing tools of their rulers, ready to support their ever-increasing ambitions and to applaud the intensified spasms of savagery which were produced each month for the furtherance of those ambitions, and for the education of the world. The stage, in fact, had been set for, and the audience were in the mood to appreciate, a maximum of war effort on the part of Washington.



LAYING TIMBERS FOR A NEW AMERICAN DOCK AT A PORT IN FRANCE.

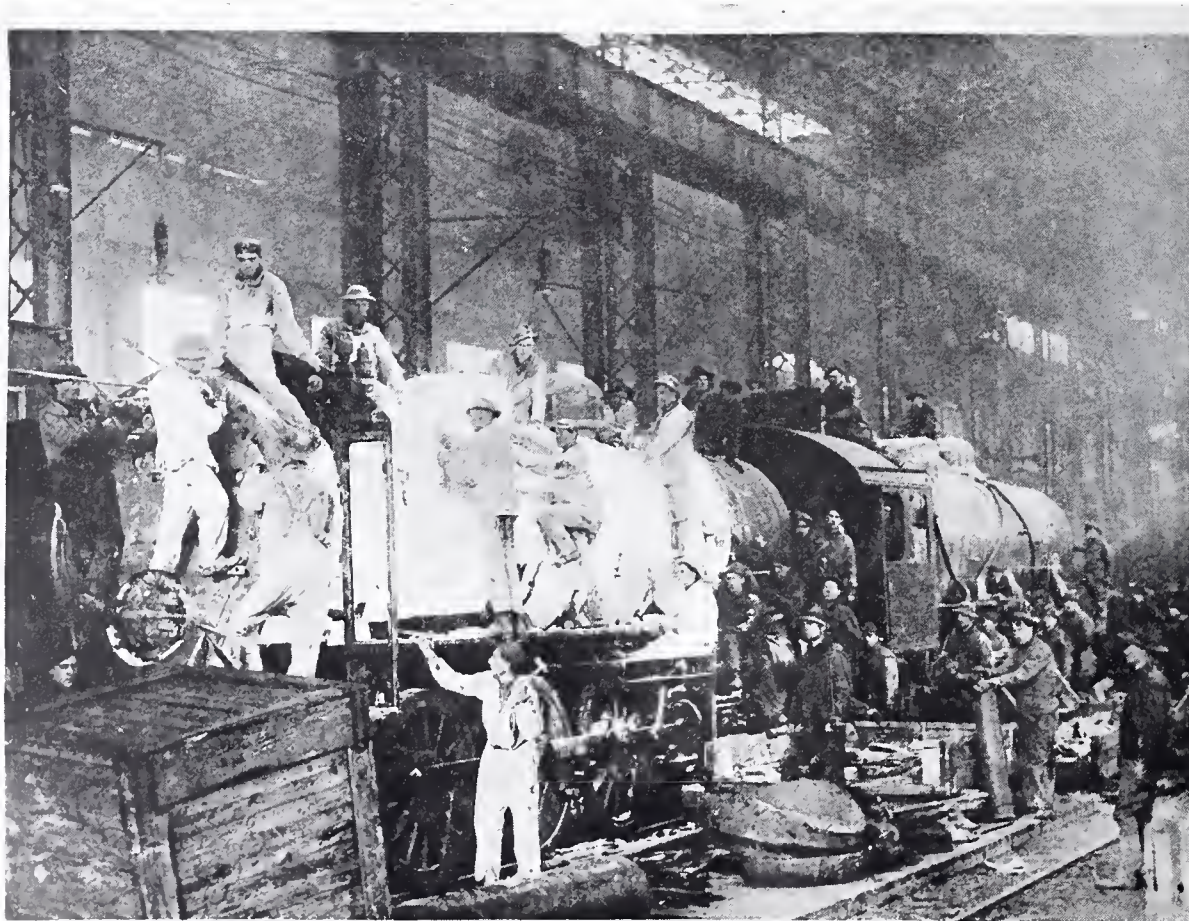


As noted at the outset of this chapter Washington was ready to turn preparation into achievement. To give any comprehensive account of its preparations would be impossible in the space of this chapter. The United States entered the war not only without a modern army but without any adequate nucleus for raising and maintaining one. Much had been written in days of peace about the war powers of American Presidents. It had been generally overlooked that they sprang from an eighteenth-century Constitution; that they gave the President great power over the fighting forces of which he is technically commander-in-chief, but no power over the industrial and economic organizations of the country. As shown in Vol. XIII., Chapter CXCV., something had been done to remedy this before the war.

An Advisory Board, called the Council of National Defence, had been created to prepare the way for industrial and economic organization. A Shipping Board had been created to deal with the building and operation of ships. After the outbreak of the war other boards were created, notably the Food Administration under Mr. Herbert Hoover, of Belgian relief fame.

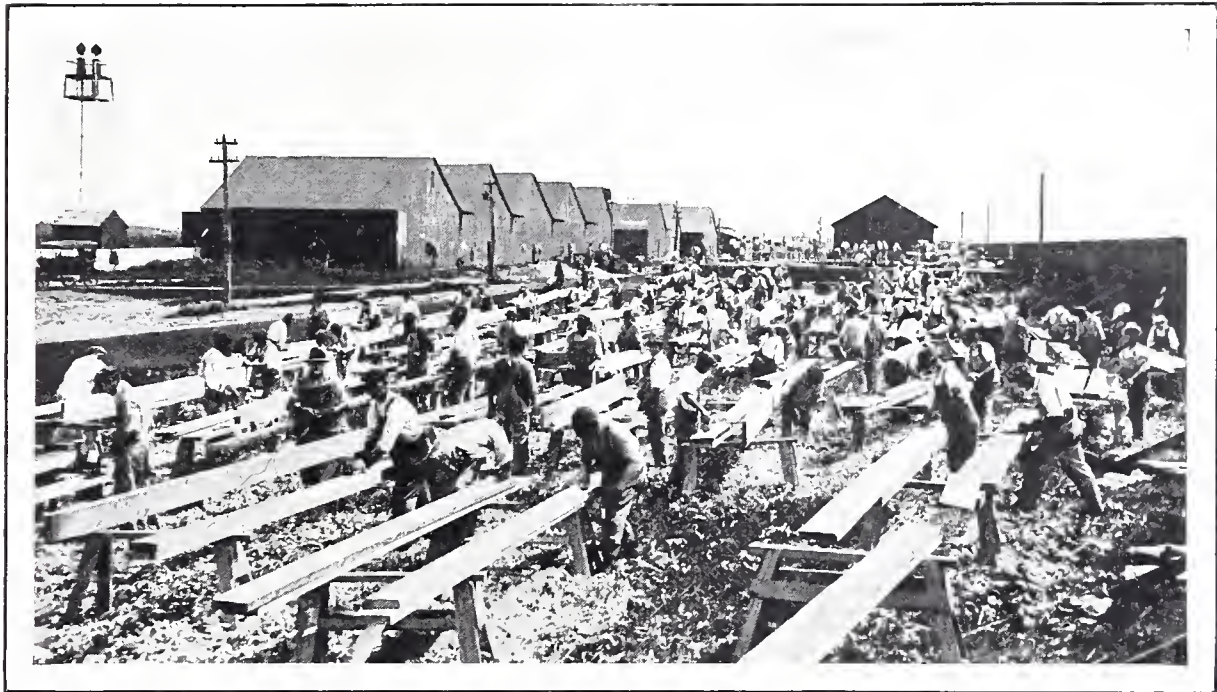
The Food Control Act creating the Food Administration was passed in August, 1917. It gave Mr. Hoover great powers which were brilliantly used, and which it is not too much to say saved the situation for the Allies in the late winter of that year and the early spring of 1918. During the winter of 1917-18 shipments of food from the United States had been running badly behind, partly on account of shortage of tonnage, which until the late autumn had been mainly used for munitions, but still more on account of the breakdown of the American railway system under the stress of war conditions aggravated by the hardest and most persistent frosts and snowfalls in a generation. For weeks all the sidings east of Chicago were full of goods trains snowed and frozen in, and in the harbours much-needed tonnage began to lie idle, sometimes for want of cargo and sometimes for want of coal.

The "tie-up" came at the worst possible time. By January 1, 1918, the United States had already exported to the Allies 60,000,000 bushels of wheat, which was about equivalent to the normal surplus from her harvest. Yet about the middle of the month Lord Rhondda



AMERICAN MECHANICS "ASSEMBLING" LOCOMOTIVES IN FRANCE FOR THE USE OF AMERICAN TROOPS. [Official photograph.]





BUILDING AN AVIATION CAMP, JULY, 1917.

cabled to Mr. Hoover that imperative necessity commanded him to ask for 75,000,000 bushels more from the United States, if Great Britain and the Allies were to hold out until American military aid became available. Simultaneously Mr. Hoover was asked for 15,000,000 bushels of wheat from Belgium. Nevertheless, he replied to Lord Rhondda that "We will export every grain that the American people can save from their normal consumption. We believe our people will not fail to meet the emergency."

It was an emergency that might have crushed a less resolute and able man than Mr. Hoover or a people less generous and adaptable than those of the United States. For the wheat problem, if the greatest, was not the only food problem to be faced. Before the war the United States had been exporting about 1,000,000 pounds of beef a month and about 50,000,000 pounds of pork products. During 1916-17 the average of pork exports had doubled, and that of beef exports had risen to the remarkable figure of 22,000,000 pounds a month. During the latter part of 1917 this had already meant meatless days and a virtual disappearance of bacon from patriotic breakfast tables. Yet on January 26 Mr. Hoover announced that during the next three months, with a cattle and hog supply which was if anything below the normal, the United States would have to find an average of 80,000,000 pounds a month of beef for the Allies and her own army in Europe and an average of 150,000,000 pounds of pork products,

and that sugar requirements would be equally stringent.

On January 28 the President issued a proclamation asking the country to reduce the national consumption of wheat by 30 per cent. and to observe even stricter regulations about meatless as well as wheatless days. So loyally did the country respond to this and later demands that white bread virtually vanished in a few months from American households and eating places and the situation was saved for the Allies. To appreciate the magnitude of this achievement it must be remembered how remote the war still was from the United States, how great was the amount to be saved, and how difficult it is to enforce food regulations over a continent.

Also, as said above, the elements were on the side of Germany, and it was not until after many weeks that it was possible to hurry the result of this saving across the Atlantic in sufficient quantities. It was not until April 5 that the Food Ministers of the Allies were able to telegraph to the United States their thanks for an achievement which, to use the words of Lord Rhondda, "was the result of such self-sacrifice and whole-hearted effort as to inspire us with renewed determination."

These messages, it is worth noting, were the immediate result of the decision of a monster meeting of American hotel-keepers to abolish the use of wheat products in their hotels in order that their example and their savings might

facilitate the continued shipment of adequate supplies to Europe.

If less spectacular and less noticeable to the average man, the value of the financial aid that the United States brought the Allies during the period dealt with in this chapter was equal if not superior to that rendered by



M. ANDRÉ TARDIEU,  
French High Commissioner in the United States.

Mr. Hoover's admirable organization. Though it was not at the time generally realized, the entry of the United States into the war cut Great Britain free from a network of financial difficulties continued entanglement in which might have spelt defeat and would certainly have impaired the war strength of all the Allies. The Allies, and especially Great Britain, had been buying supplies in great and increasing quantities from the United States. Despite the artificial stabilisation of exchange, the difficulty of financing these purchases was steadily growing. It was becoming more difficult and more expensive to raise credit loans in the United States. Supplies of securities which could be used as collateral were becoming exhausted. Perhaps the most important tangible accomplishment of Mr. Balfour's Mission to Washington in the spring of 1917 was the arrangement whereby the United States promised to lend a certain sum to Great Britain each month for expenditure in the United States. M. Viviani simultaneously gained a

similar concession to France, and arrangements were made by the appropriate authorities for participation of Italy and Belgium and the other Allies in U.S. Government loans at the rate of 3 per cent., or about half the cost of the money the European belligerents had borrowed in the United States during the days of her neutrality. Finishing touches were later given to these arrangements by M. André Tardieu, the French High Commissioner, on behalf of France, and by his British colleague, Lord Northcliffe, on behalf of Great Britain, assisted in the autumn of 1917 by Lord Reading, who visited Washington as special high commissioner to deal for the British Government with financial affairs.

Altogether, up to the end of May, 1918, the United States had thus lent the following amounts to the Allies :

				\$
Great Britain	...	...	...	2,975,000,000
France	...	...	...	1,665,000,000
Italy	...	...	...	650,000,000
Russia	...	...	...	325,000,000
Belgium	...	...	...	117,850,000
Cuba	...	...	...	15,000,000
Serbia	...	...	...	9,000,000
Total				5,756,850,000

This great sum was found out of the proceeds of the three war loans authorized by Congress on April 24 and September 24, 1917, and April 4, 1918, which, under the name of the first, second, and third Liberty Loans, produced the following amount :

(1)	\$2,000,000,000	(\$2,000,000,000 offered).
(2)	\$3,808,000,000	(\$4,616,000,000 offered).
(3)	\$4,170,000,000	(\$3,000,000,000 was set as the minimum but over subscription accepted).
Total		\$9,978,000,000

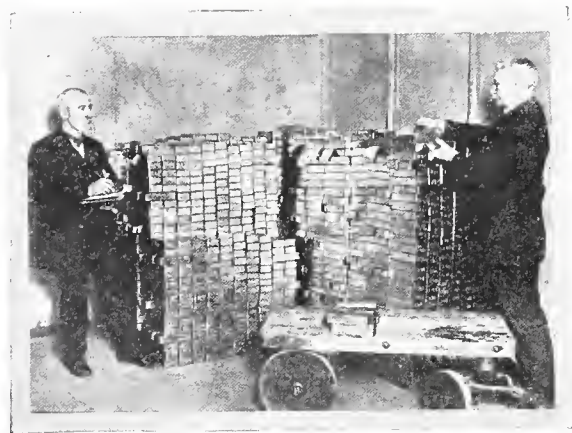
To the first loan there were 4,500,000 subscribers ; to the second, 10,000,000 ; and to the third, 17,000,000.

Between the loan issues, for the purpose of meeting immediate needs, temporary certificates of indebtedness were issued in considerable quantities in anticipation of the proceeds of the loan and of taxation. But as these certificates were promptly redeemed they need not be considered in calculating the money borrowed from her people by the United States.

Roughly speaking, American war expenditure for the fiscal year 1917-18, including loans to the Allies, was about \$13,000,000,000. The difference between this sum and the proceeds of the war loans was made up by taxation,



bringing in between three and four billion dollars. Though the proportion of money raised per head of the population was less than the proportion of that raised by Great Britain in the same period, the showing was one of which



**GOLD WAITING TO BE MINTED AT PHILADELPHIA.**

Americans had just right to be proud. It was clear, moreover, before the end of the fiscal year that the United States was prepared to dig deeper. During the last week of May, 1918, the President demanded of Congress the passage of another taxation bill calculated to raise in 1918-1919, according to a subsequent statement of the Secretary of the Treasury, \$8,000,000,000 instead of the three or four billions raised in 1917-18. One of the reasons why the President, against the first wishes of a large majority of legislators, insisted on this demand, besides, of course, the lesson of the German offensive, was that for May the monthly total outlay of the Government, including loans to the Allies, jumped from about \$1,200,000,000 to \$1,500,000,000, with the prospect that, as the Secretary of the Treasury also explained, the increase would be progressive, and that for the coming fiscal year expenditures might be as high as \$23,000,000,000, or about \$10,000,000,000 higher than for the current year.

American participation in the trade war against Germany was equally thorough. One of the President's first acts as a belligerent had been to get Congress to authorize the establishment of a War Trade Board, of which he made Mr. Vance McCormick, his political manager, the head. The business of the Board was to help Great Britain to render effective her blockade of the Central Powers, a blockade which up to April, 1917, had been considerably hampered by regard for the attitude of the United States on certain controverted points.

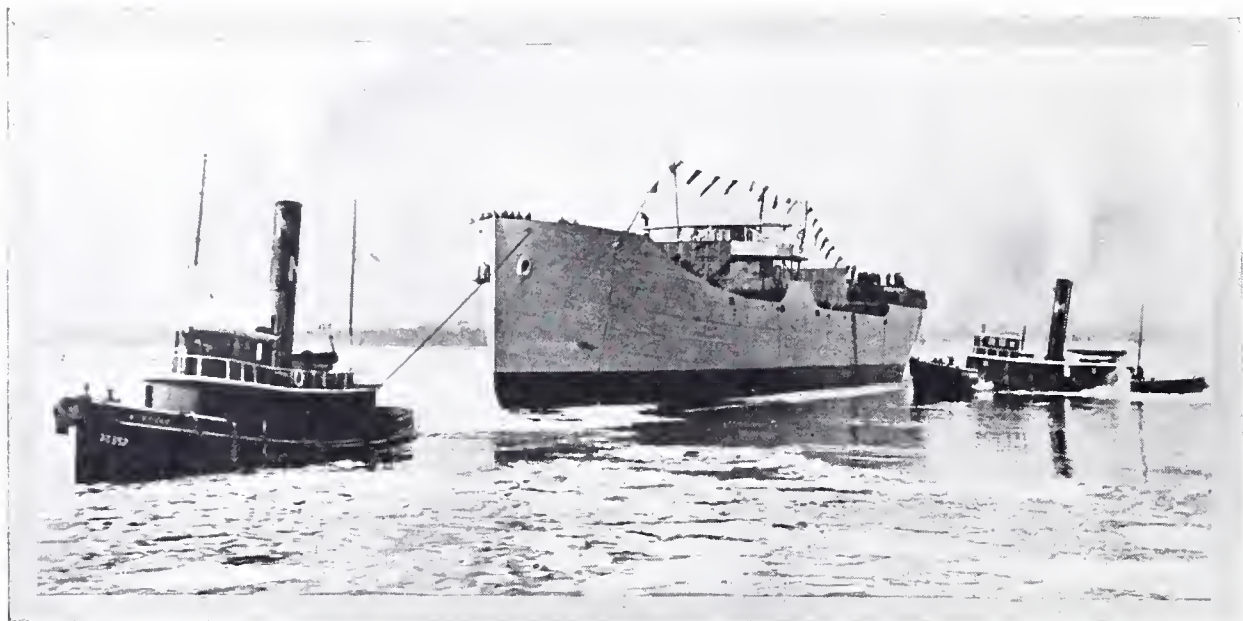
The chief weapon of the Board was a law enacted in the summer of 1917 enabling the President to declare an embargo on exports. It was thus possible to control exports to northern European neutrals in such a way as to reinforce the British policy of obtaining guarantees against re-exportation to Germany. Later the same policy was set up in regard to imports in the interests of economy of shipping and of essential industries. In October, 1917, the Board further aided the Allies in this by the publication of an enemy trading list, which corresponded to the British statutory list of firms suspected of enemy relations with whom British subjects were not to trade. So quietly did the Board work that its achievements did not receive much advertisement; but they deserve particular notice for the light they shed upon Washington's determination from the first to play the game liberally and generously with its partner.

The American black list was, moreover,



**MR. VANCE McCORMICK,  
Chairman of the War Trade Board.**

something more than a war measure. German merchants and financiers, aided by the slackness of British and American efforts in those directions, had for years, and with considerable success, been working to capture Latin-American trade. During the earlier stages of the war their activities had been no more than scotched by British sea power. German



### LAUNCH OF A "VICTORY SHIP."

The first of the standardised merchant ships.

funds in both North and South America had been sufficient to "carry on" with, and until the United States joined with us in black-listing the firms through which Berlin and Hamburg were working it looked as if the end of the war might have found their agents in a fairly strong position. The American black list brought their schemes tumbling about them as effectively as the control of American exports, and the "rationing" arrangements which the United States was consequently able to conclude with the Northern neutrals, sapped the economic war strength of the Central Powers sufficiently to offset, for a time at any rate, the advantages of "peace" with Russia.

In the United States, also, Washington gave a shrewd blow to German efforts to preserve the nucleus of after-the-war-trade by the appointment of an alien property custodian with powers so comprehensive that, in May, 1917, he was able to report that in eight months he had routed out and taken over \$700,000,000 worth of German property, and hoped to double his bag in a short time.

Nor was the United States any more backward in assuming her share of the other great obligations which in wars against European despotisms had traditionally fallen upon Anglo-Saxon shoulders. Within two months of her declaration of war American destroyers were cooperating with the British Fleet against German submarines; a few months later a powerful contingent of American Dreadnoughts steamed into a British harbour to merge them-

selves with the Grand Fleet, and by May, 1918, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy was able to announce that the United States had 150 warships in European waters manned by 40,000 or 50,000 men. At the beginning of the war, he continued, the total *personnel* of the Navy was but 75,000; it was, when he spoke, 350,000, and by the end of the year it would be half a million. Many of the 150 warships were, of course, converted yachts and craft of that kind. But the United States had at the same time made good progress with a big building programme, which, especially so far as destroyers and small craft went, was destined greatly to strengthen Anglo-Saxon sea-power. It was noticeable that the Navy Department had less trouble in its yards during this period than the Shipping Board and many of the private yards working for this Board. The Navy Department, in fact, from the very first worked in such a way as to be a consistently barren preserve for critics of the Administration. Thus in May, 1918, Senator Lodge, a Republican leader, who had been unremitting in his criticisms upon the War Government of President Wilson, said in a public speech:

Have you heard of any investigations or criticisms of our Navy? I have heard none, and I am fairly familiar with it as a member of the Naval Affairs Committee. The Navy has done extremely well. Secretary Daniels has made no statements to the public of what he hoped to do. He has not said in 1917 what he is going to do in 1918. All he says is what has been accomplished. He has strong men as his bureau heads. He deserves credit for having selected them.

This tribute was all the more remarkable



inasmuch as Mr. Daniels, the Secretary of the Navy, had during the early years of his administration been the target of persistent abuse and ridicule on the part of Conservatives, who resented the zeal wherewith he introduced temperance and other social reforms into the Navy, and who did not scruple to declare him an incompetent faddist.

Such were the chief achievements of the United States in the war even before she was galvanized into renewed efforts by the reverberation of Hindenburg's blows upon the Allies. It is a catalogue which, put into the right perspective, renders almost trivial the temporary failures and delays of which so much was made in the winter of 1917-18. By reason of the magnitude of the demands, and it must be added by reason of the inadequacy of the peace establishment, it was, of course, upon the War Department and its emergency branches that the weight of criticism converged.

The American War Office on the eve of the outbreak of hostilities was a small organization responsible for an army little more than 100,000 strong. Even the second line troops were only partially under its jurisdiction. Its Ordnance Department had less than 1,000 field guns and a mere handful of heavy artillery ;

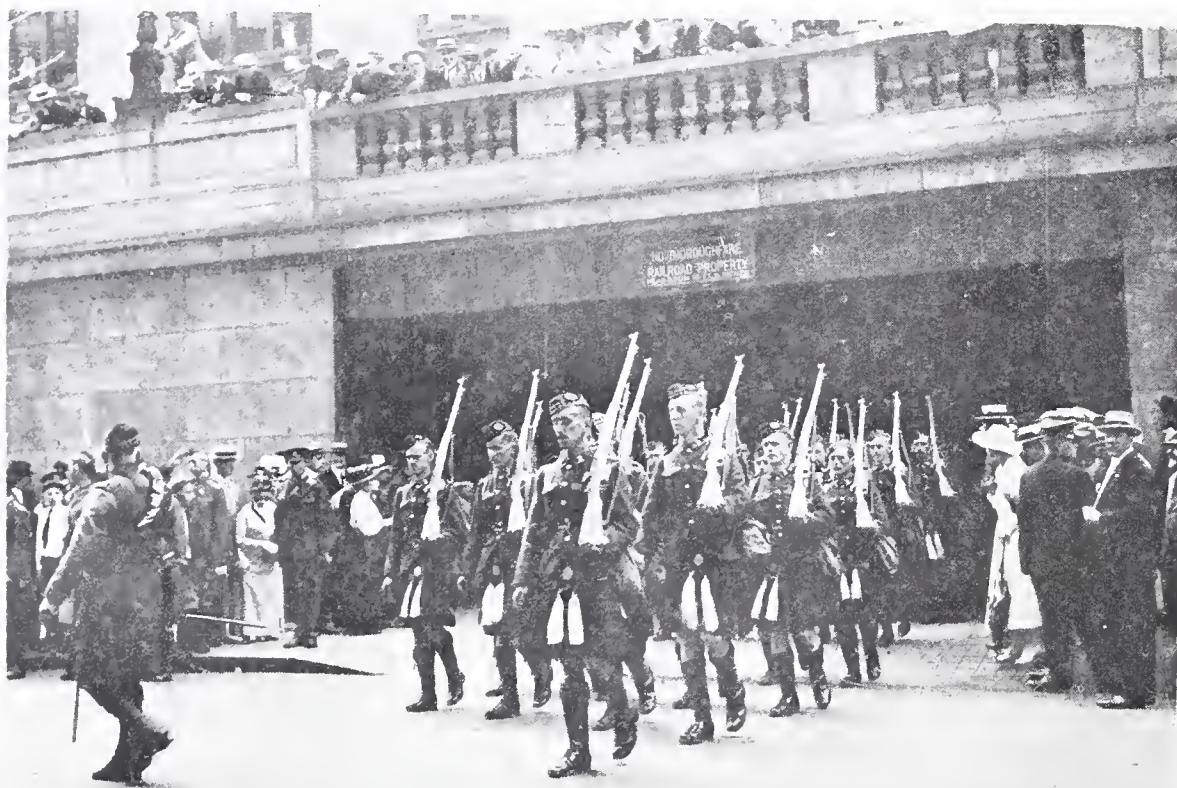
the capacity of its arsenals was limited ; its machinery for the purchase of munitions and materials in the open market was hedged around by all sorts of restrictions, not the least of which was the jealous care with which Congress scrutinized expenditures. Its Quartermaster's and other Departments were wanting in *personnel*, authority and coordination. Its Aviation Section amounted to little more than a handful of enthusiasts eating their hearts out because Congress had been so slow to learn the lessons of the war.

Upon this organization was flung during the early part of the summer of 1917 responsibility for the raising of a large conscript army, for the extemporization of its equipment, from heavy artillery to buttons, for the most ambitious aircraft programme that the world had then seen, and for the eventual installation of the whole establishment in France. It was as if the London War Office of August, 1914, had suddenly been told not only to send across the British Expeditionary Force but to prepare and equip without delay a second army such as fought in 1916 on the Somme. It would therefore be to give an unfair picture of the realization of the American war-programme to deny that uncomfortable and unsatisfactory



LAUNCH OF AN AMERICAN DREADNOUGHT.





#### CANADIAN GORDON HIGHLANDERS ARRIVE IN NEW YORK.

The visit was arranged to stimulate recruiting.

months intervened after the first glow of pride at the inception of the American war-programme had died away—after the Mission of Mr. Balfour, M. Viviani and Marshal Joffre had departed and Washington was left to discover how best to vindicate promises so enthusiastically and generously made. Nor can it be denied that the ordnance programme was even a year later still badly behind, and that at the crisis of the war the American army in France was dependent almost entirely upon British and French artillery and ammunition. There was some justice in statements made in the Senate during those days to the effect that six months had been wasted by the efforts of American experts to improve on British and French gun types, among other causes, and that it would be late in the year before production would really begin to relieve the allies of the strain of finding artillery for the American armies.

The first thing done, readers of previous chapters of this history will remember, was to invoke to the aid of the Government the business brains of the country. There is no need to recapitulate how generously this aid was given; how the Council of National Defence grew by leaps and bounds and multiplied its committees to meet every demand

of the situation: how the Aircraft Board was formed and finally authorised by Congress to help the War Department with the air programme; how the Shipping Board was strengthened and again strengthened by hosts of willing recruits; how man after man who was making a fortune in business came to Washington for a dollar a year, bringing with him secretaries and stenographers until in all the city of 350,000 no hotel or boarding house was to be found that was not filled to overflowing.

It was soon discovered that patriotism and self-sacrifice, no matter how able the individuals concerned, are not enough for the successful levying of a modern war. The Council of National Defence, which was the nucleus of all the extra-departmental war organization of Washington, with the exception of independent bodies like the Food Administration and the Shipping Board, had under the statute creating it merely advisory powers. It was hoped at first that this drawback might be overcome by cooperation.

A General Munitions Board was formed to help the Ordnance Bureau of the War Department in getting materials of war. Though ably managed by a young Cleveland man of business, Mr. Frank A. Scott, though full of experts,



and though the War Department was represented on it, it was unable to accomplish as much as was expected of it. It was the same with the 150 odd other committees of the Council. There was much confusion and waste of effort owing to constant overlapping of power and activities on the part of the committees of the Council and of the various divisions of the War Department, which in turn were not always constituted so as to eliminate the same drawbacks as between themselves.

During the summer of 1917, especially after the French and British War Missions under

The establishment of a Ministry of Munitions with a Priority Board was early suggested by those who had studied European methods. The suggestion was answered in August by the establishment of a War Industries Board, to supersede the General Munitions Board, the chairman of the old organization becoming the chairman of the new one. Further to coalesce authority two sub-committees were created out of its membership. Mr. Baruch, the Jewish financier, who, as described in the last American chapter of this history, had early—at first through his friendship with the President and



MR. JOSEPHUS DANIELS,  
Secretary of the Navy.

M. André Tardieu and Lord Northcliffe respectively, and the Italian War Mission under the Italian Ambassador, had established themselves in Washington to take over for their Governments the work of purchasing supplies which had heretofore been conducted by private firms, criticism of the state of affairs grew by leaps and bounds. The representatives of the allied Governments and of the various branches of the American war machine must, it was proclaimed by many Americans, be given a source to which they could go for the supplies they needed and for the settlement of the thousand and one questions that arose from priority and prices downwards.

afterwards through his proved ability—become powerful in the war councils of Washington, Mr. Brookings, a well-known Middle Western authority on industrial matters, and Mr. Lovett, the railway magnate and lawyer, were appointed members of a Central Purchasing Commission, on which Mr. Hoover was to sit when food supplies were concerned. The second sub-committee was to deal with priorities under Mr. Lovett. On the main war industries committee both the Navy and War Departments were again represented.

This arrangement also did less than its originators had hoped. Into the long controversy that supervened there is no space to go.

Roughly speaking, the contention of those whose demands swelled during the autumn and winter of 1917-18 for a Ministry of Munitions was that the War Industries Board still had insufficient authority to deal with the industries of the country and that the War Department was too loosely organized to cooperate with it. The situation was aggravated by personal and departmental grievances, and, with the exception of the Navy Department, whose machinery needed less expansion and fewer additions, the war machinery in Washington, to use the phrase popular at the time, did need "coordination."

Things came to a head during the ensuing winter. The Senate, largely at the instigation of Mr. Chamberlain, a Democratic member the sincerity of whose patriotism was beyond question, started an investigation at which the Secretary of War and various of his subordinates appeared. The evidence brought out by the investigating committee and widely displayed in the Press was not of a nature to appeal to a public which up to that time had been convinced that the enthusiastic promises of the preceding spring were being at least realized. Congress-



**MR. ROBT. S. BROOKINGS,**  
Central Purchasing Commission.

men fresh from visits to France proclaimed that the army there was indignant at the lack of ordnance and equipment. The Chief of Ordnance was obliged to admit that after eight months of war the army was still dependent upon its allies for artillery, that there was still a shortage of rifles, and that the output of machine-guns had been delayed for reasons

that many thought might have been avoided. Even papers as friendly to the Administration as the *New York World* inveighed against "red tape."

The investigation tended to support the view



**MR. ROBERT S. LOVETT,**  
Central Purchasing Commission.

of those who maintained that preparations for war, in spite of the reforms of the summer, were being hampered by (1) lack of a central purchasing and producing authority; (2) overlapping and lack of teamwork between the various divisions of Government Departments, especially the War Department, and between the Departments and the emergency bureaux of the Government. If, it was urged, the President will not have a Ministry of Munitions, let him have at least a War Cabinet.

Such innovations the President refused to contemplate. He was sharply criticized for unwillingness to delegate authority. He retaliated paradoxically by asking Congress to pass a Bill, known by the name of its sponsor as the Overman Bill, still further increasing his personal powers over the Administration by allowing him to shuffle and consolidate the existing branches of the Government without reference to Congress. His demand gave his critics fresh ammunition. He blandly returned to the attack with another proposal to strengthen his hands in the shape of a Bill authorizing the Treasury Department to form a War Finance Corporation with \$500,000,000 of Government funds and empowered to issue \$4,000,000,000 short-term notes to finance private ventures that might be deemed vital to the war. In order to restrict operations not vital to the war,





#### FOOD AWAITING SHIPMENT FOR AMERICAN TROOPS IN FRANCE.

the Treasury Department was to be authorized to refuse leave to ordinary business undertakings to issue securities to a greater sum than \$100,000.

The President did not expect Congress to swallow such a dose without a liberal supply of treacle. Having worked them up to a state of great excitement, he confounded his critics, who to their earlier charges were adding that of a lack of organizing ability, by a series of far-reaching and far-seeing shuffles of the war agencies already existing. He overhauled the War Department by successive orders by the Secretary of War in such a sense that it left at the head of its various production departments one of the ablest men of affairs in the country, Mr. Stettinius, a partner of J. P. Morgan & Co. The storage and shipment of supplies he entrusted to General Goethals, the builder of the Panama Canal, who had resigned some time previously from the Shipping Board. The powers of the General Staff, until then technically advisory, were made genuinely administrative and divided into compact divisions with headquarters in one building instead of scattered all over Washington as had begun to be the case.

Having strengthened the War Department, the President turned his attention to the extemporized machinery for production and supplies. He made Mr. Baruch chairman of the War Industries, which had been for some time without a chief, and gave him powers so great as to ensure him real authority both over his own work and for cooperation with Mr. Stettinius. The President's letter to Mr. Baruch is, however, best quoted in full :

Washington, March 4, 1918.

MY DEAR MR. BARUCH,—I am writing to ask if you will not accept appointment as chairman of the War Industries Board, and I am going to take the liberty at the

same time of outlining the functions, the constitution and action of the Board as I think they should now be established.

The functions of the Board should be :

- (1) The creation of new facilities and the disclosing, if necessary the opening up, of new or additional sources of supply ;
- (2) The conversion of existing facilities, where necessary, to new uses ;
- (3) The studious conservation of resources and facilities by scientific, commercial and industrial economies ;
- (4) Advice to the several purchasing agencies of the Government with regard to the prices to be paid ;
- (5) The determination, wherever necessary, of priori-



[Official photograph.]

#### UNLOADING IN FRANCE SUPPLIES FOR THE AMERICAN TROOPS.



ties of production and of delivery and of the proportions of any given article to be made immediately accessible to the several purchasing agencies when the supply of that article is insufficient, either temporarily or permanently :

(6) The making of purchases for the Allies.

The Board should be constituted as at present and should retain, so far as necessary and so far as consistent with the character and purposes of the reorganization, its present advisory agencies : but the ultimate decision of all questions, except the determination of prices, should rest always with the chairman, the other members acting in a cooperative and advisory capacity. The further organization of advice I will indicate below.



**GENERAL GOETHALS,**  
Member of War Council responsible for Storage  
and Shipment of Supplies.

In the determination of priorities of production, when it is not possible to have the full supply of any article that is needed produced at once, the chairman should be assisted, and so far as practicable, guided by the present priorities organization or its equivalent.

In the determination of priorities of delivery, when they must be determined, he should be assisted when necessary in addition to the present priorities organization, by the advice and cooperation of a committee constituted for the purpose and consisting of official representatives of the Food Administration, the Railway Administration, the Shipping Board, and the War Trade Board, in order that when a priority of delivery has been determined there may be common, consistent and concerted action to carry it into effect.

In the determination of prices the chairman should be governed by the advice of a committee consisting, besides himself, of the members of the Board immediately charged with the study of raw materials and of manufactured products, of the labour member of the Board, of the chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, the chairman of the Tariff Commission, and the Fuel Administrator.

The Chairman should be consistently and systemati-

cally informed of all contracts, purchases, and deliveries, in order that he may have always before him a schematized analysis of the progress of business in the several supply divisions of the Government in all departments.

The duties of the chairman are :

(1) To act for the joint and several benefit of all the supply departments of the Government ;

(2) To let alone what is being successfully done and interfere as little as possible with the present normal processes of purchase and delivery in the several departments ;

(3) To guide and assist wherever the need for guidance or assistance may be revealed. For example, in the allocation of contracts, in obtaining access to materials in any way pre-empted, or in the disclosure of sources of supply ;

(4) To determine what is to be done when there is any competitive or other conflict of interest between departments in the matter of supplies. For example, when there is not a sufficient immediate supply for all and there must be a decision as to the priority of need or delivery, or when there is competition for the same source of manufacture or supply, or when contracts have not been placed in such a way as to get advantage of the full productive capacity of the country ;

(5) To see that contracts and deliveries are followed up where such assistance as is indicated under (3) and (4) above has proved to be necessary ;

(6) To anticipate the prospective needs of the several supply departments of the Government and their feasible adjustment to the industry of the country as far in advance as possible, in order that as definite an outlook and opportunity for planning as possible may be afforded the business man of the country.

In brief, he should act as the general eye of all supply departments in the field of industry.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

WOODROW WILSON.

Ten days later a price-fixing committee for



**MR. EDWARD R. STETTINIUS,**  
Head of Production Departments.

all basic raw materials for the Allies as well as for the United States was appointed by the Council of National Defence to cooperate with the War Industries Board, which, as time went on, began to act with the War Department more as a Ministry of Munitions with the Council of National Defence in the back





SIR FRANCIS LLOYD REVIEWING IN LONDON BRITISH SUBJECTS RECRUITED IN THE UNITED STATES.

ground to give information and the means of obtaining it.

Scarcely had these reforms been promulgated than the President found his attention claimed by other important war organizations. The Aircraft Board, which was, of course, closely connected with the War Department, was, like the Shipping Board, being as vigorously assailed as the War Department and its ancillary committees. During the winter of 1917-18 both bodies had been struggling to maturity through a stormy and disappointing adolescence. The signs that either was likely to fulfil the brilliant horoscope of its birth were for a time scant and obscure.

The United States had pledged herself to the Balfour Mission in the spring of 1917 to build 6,000,000 tons D.W. by the end of 1918. To do this a flying start would have been required. Instead valuable weeks were wasted in the Shipping Board by a running quarrel between General Goethals and Mr. Denman, a lawyer-politician of San Francisco, who were in charge of its two chief divisions. In view of General Goethals's world-wide reputation, there was never any doubt in the minds of the public as to the rights of the quarrel, but so involved did the plight of the Board get that in July, 1917, the President was constrained to dismiss both men. Their successor was Mr. Hurley, a Chicago business man of considerable ability and a close friend of the

President. It soon became evident that, handicapped by lack of special knowledge on his own part and that of the majority of his Board, by labour troubles and difficulty in getting materials, Mr. Hurley would be unable to produce in the Government yards or get from private yards anything like the promised tonnage in the promised time. Gradually, despite many optimistic statements from Mr. Hurley and his colleagues, who were in fact doing much excellent preliminary work, Congress and the public began to realise that all was not well with the ship programme, and after various investigations the President, in the spring of 1918, appointed Mr. Schwab to co-operate with Mr. Hurley in the production of ships.

Mr. Schwab's influence immediately became apparent. Trained in the biggest kind of business—he had been one of Mr. Carnegie's "young men," and had long been one of the dominating figures in the American steel world—Mr. Schwab approached his task with imagination and energy. He moved the headquarters of the Shipping Board's office responsible for production to Philadelphia, near which were congregated on the Delaware the largest yards in the country. Familiar with manufacturing on the largest scale, he managed to instil into his subordinates, down to the all-important riveters, a spirit of patriotic emulation, and in the course of a few weeks

gave to the greatest of America's nascent war industries the necessary "push and go." He had, too, the advantage of reaping where Mr. Hurley had sown. In April and May American ship production really began to start, as labour began to settle down, as the new plants that Mr. Hurley had so energetically



**MR. CHAS. E. HUGHES.**

Appointed to enquire into alleged speculation in connexion with aeroplane production.

striven for began to produce, and as difficulties in regard to material began to be overcome. That the United States would live up to her early promise of 6,000,000 tons D.W. for 1918 was never possible. But whereas in January, 1918, her output for the month was under 100,000 tons, it had in May risen to about 250,000, with the prospect of sufficient further increases to produce at least 2,500,000 by the end of the year. What with the appearance in the autumn of 1917 of 600,000 tons of German shipping seized in American ports (after being badly damaged) at the declaration of war, with the tonnage acquired for the trans-Atlantic trade by agreement with Holland, the Scandinavian countries, and Japan, amounting in all to nearly 1,000,000 tons, under American operation, and with the transfer of vessels from the Great Lakes and other unessential trades to the Atlantic, it had become, in view of the waning power of the submarine, tolerably certain that the Allies

could afford to wait for the production period of the vast new shipyards established during 1917-18 on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts and on the shores of the Great Lakes. There was, too, a comfortable certainty that American tonnage would be at hand to meet the serious shortage of ocean carriers that would inevitably be not the smallest of the problems with which peace would confront the world.

The history of aeroplane production was not dissimilar from, though more sensational than, that of ship production. Despite many glowing promises, a series of delays excessively humiliating to American pride prevented a start in quantity production until the spring of 1918. After Mr. Coffin, as described in the previous chapter of this history, had been appointed head of the aircraft production machinery and had gathered round him a number of the best motor engineers of the country, the public was electrified by stories of the preparation of whole fleets of aircraft engined by the famous Liberty motor, a product of the standardised perfection of the American motor industry



**MR. JOHN D. RYAN,**  
Director of Aircraft Production.

which would in a comparatively short time be bombing Germany out of existence. The idea ran through the popular imagination like wildfire. It was new, American, decisive. Responsible officials encouraged it. It was announced that there were to be 3,500 machines in France by the end of 1917. General Squier, the head of the aeronautical branch of the War Department, talked of sweeping the



Germans from the skies and blinding their cannon. Yet early in 1918 it was discovered that not an aeroplane had reached France, and gradually it came out that the famous Liberty motor was in point of fact still in the experimental stage.

A great clamour arose. What, asked the more or less initiated, would the Allies think of the non-arrival of the aeroplanes promised them for the opening of the spring fighting? What, the public asked, had become of the \$640,000,000 appropriated for "rush" aeroplane production? Why were American aviators kicking their heels in France and England for want of machines? The clamour grew when Mr. Gutsen Berglum, the well-known sculptor and a keen amateur, whom the President had asked to investigate, began to be described in the Press as hinting peculation and worse. Congress prepared to investigate. The President, to stave off the useless publicity of a Parliamentary enquiry, ordered the



**MR. EDWARD H. HURLEY,**  
Chairman of the Shipping Board.

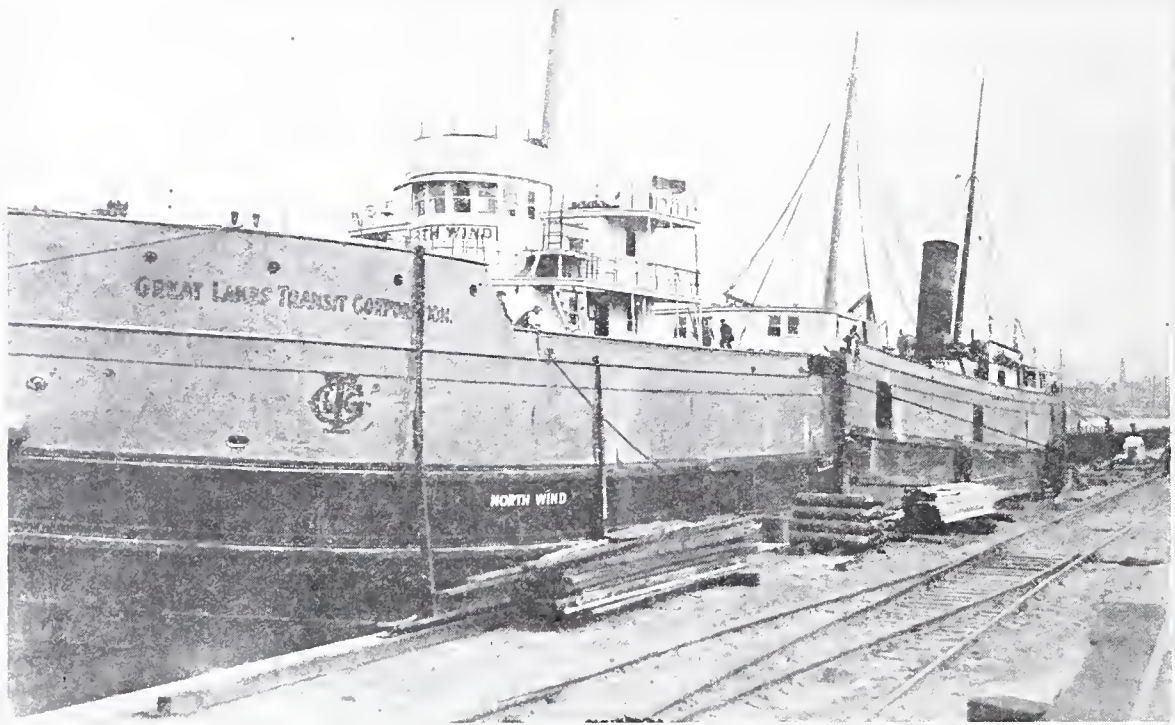
Department of Justice to do the same, and by a stroke of political as well as practical genius asked Mr. Charles E. Hughes, whom he had defeated in the last election, to cooperate. This stilled the clamour of Congress and the public, as Mr. Hughes was known as one of the most impartial and able of lawyers and had made his reputation originally by his success-

ful investigation of the New York Insurance Company scandal in 1906. Mr. Hughes was still engaged on the work at the period with which this chapter closes. Only two points need be noticed. The first is that the failure of Mr. Coffin and his associates was only partial and comparative. It was compara-



**MR. CHAS. M. SCHWAB,**  
Director General of the Emergency Fleet Corporation.

tive because it became early apparent that they had in their first great enthusiasm advertised for themselves an impossible standard; it was partial because the criticism levelled against them took too little account of the vast amount of spade-work done, of the great aeroplane plants established, of the great aerodromes and training camps constructed, of the difficult organization of American engineering and timber resources, and so on. There were, for instance, more men in the American aviation service in March, 1918, than there had been in the whole army in March, 1917. Nevertheless, in April, 1918, the President put over Mr. Coffin and his partner of the War Department, General Squier, Mr. John D. Ryan, one of the greatest of Western mining magnates and a self-made business man of tried ability. If Mr. Ryan found production of the Liberty motor badly in arrears owing to the rather obstinate determination of the American engineers to produce a perfect American machine rather than to copy European patterns, he at any rate found in the motor as evolved a good solid engine capable



A LAKE STEAMER CUT IN TWO TO FACILITATE ITS TRANSFER TO THE ATLANTIC.

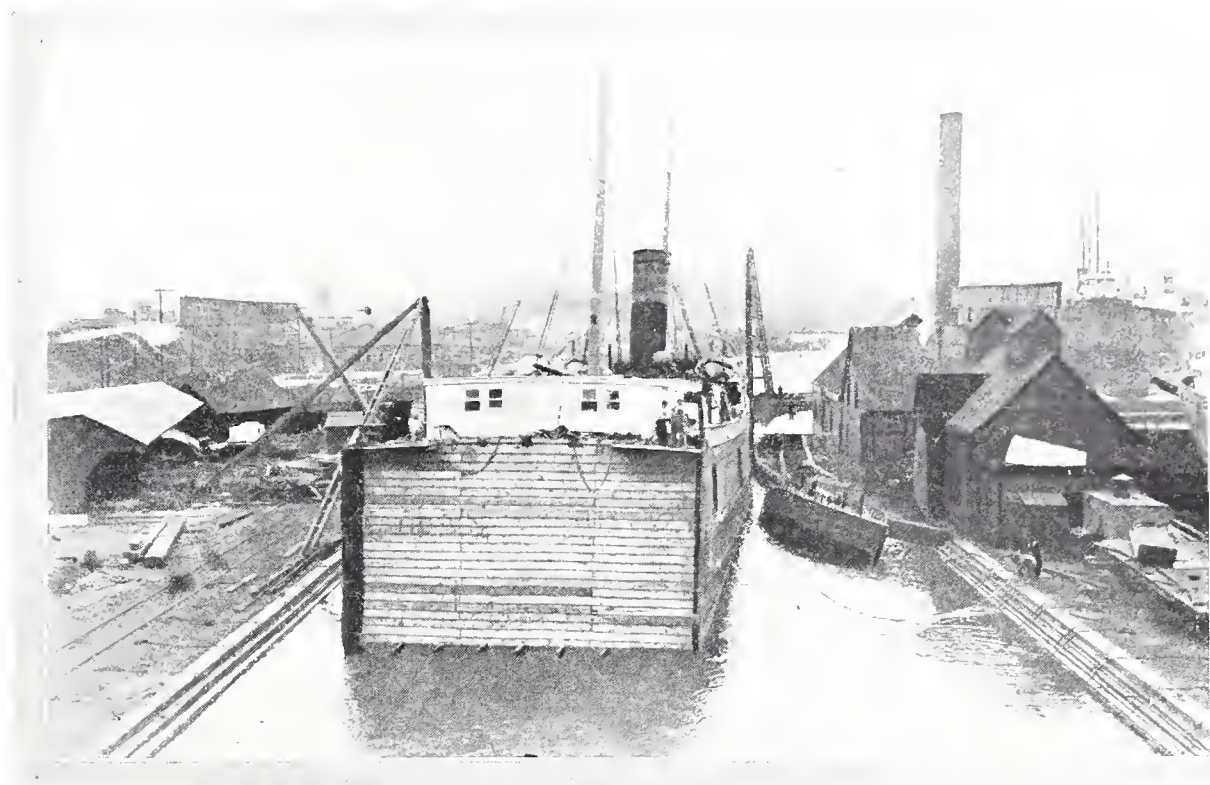
of useful work as it stood and of considerable eventual improvement. If he found manifold difficulties regarding the building of machines still to be overcome; if he found signs of delay and confusion that might have been avoided; he at any rate had been given by Mr. Coffin and his associates the nucleus of an effective organization for the eventual production of a first-class air-service.

It was the same in other directions. It was not only that the great fighting and producing departments had been overhauled and that the right people were coming to the top. The conditions upon which they had in the last resort to depend for success were improving. During 1917 two of the chief difficulties with which everyone had to contend were labour and the railways. The railways, not to put too fine a point upon it, had in the winter of 1917-18 broken down under the stress of war traffic, aggravated by exceptionally hard weather. To the general public the chief sign of the failure was a coal famine so bad that it was necessary (January, 1918) for the Fuel Administrator to declare a public holiday of three days, followed by several Monday holidays and otherwise to restrict the use of coal.

The famine was no doubt partly due to bad management by the Fuel Administration (which had been formed as an independent branch of Mr. Hoover's Food Administration

under the President of a New England College). One of the causes of congestion of traffic was also the somewhat indiscriminate distribution of orders on the part of the original War Industries Board. But fundamentally the fault rested with the railways and their managements, who were paying the penalty for many years of retrenchment in the face of rising wages and operating costs, and, it must be added, a good deal of hampering legislation. Seeing that the trouble could best be remedied by the Government undertaking both the financing and the management of these companies, the President made his son-in-law, Mr. McAdoo, the Secretary of the Treasury, administrator of all the railways. Mr. McAdoo acted with great energy and firmness. He made the lines pool their resources of track, rolling stock, and locomotives; he cut down superfluous traffic and competition; he ordered new engines and trucks; he shook up the administration of the companies by drastic reforms. He even demanded the resignation of certain railway presidents; he increased wages and the freight and passenger charges; and finally divided the country into administrative railway zones without reference to individual companies. The results of these reforms were instantaneous. While it was impossible to get to the root of the evil and expand rolling stock overnight,





THE STERN PORTION OF THE SAME STEAMER ON ITS PASSAGE TO THE COAST, WHERE THE TWO HALVES WERE REASSEMBLED.

there was an immediate and most valuable improvement of running conditions the country over, as was seen when in April and May, 1918, thousands of troops daily were brought down without a hitch for emergency embarkation at New York and other ports.

The improvement in the labour situation was even more significant. In the United States to a far greater extent than in England there had been until the spring of 1918 much discouraging unrest in the ranks of labour. The pressure of war had not prevented an unusual number of strikes. The energetic patriotism of Mr. Gompers, the President of the American Federation of Labour, had been unable to get things straight. There were, on the one hand, the Industrial Workers of the World, and on the other hand quite serious discontent among the unions. The Industrial Workers represented the American form of internationalism, and they turned sympathetic ears to Bolshevik agitators and to Irish renegades of the Sinn Fein variety, with both of whom secret German propagandists had probably a good deal to do. Their headquarters were in Chicago, but their greatest strength was in the Far West, in the mines of Arizona, in the shipyards of the Pacific coast, and above all in the timber regions of Washington and Oregon States. The strikes which they fomented in the lumber camps, where in point of fact labour

conditions were bad, were no small factor in the slowness of the development of the air programme.

The union unrest was less sinister, but for a time it was distinctly dangerous. It was a not entirely unjustifiable product of American industrialism, which so far as the recognition of unions was concerned was a generation behind British industrialism in 1914. The war was, argued many union men who would have been the first to maintain the stoutness of their Americanism, the first opportunity they had had to assert themselves. If the employer wanted to run his plant on a war basis, let him recognize the closed shop; otherwise labour would fight for the right to unionize first and work to beat the Germans second. This argument was never translated into action on a large scale, but there can be no doubt that its rather general currency was a strong factor in retarding the development of war efficiency.

A third serious aspect in the labour situation was at first presented by the Government's handling of it. Washington was new to labour problems. Its Ministry of Labour was only a few years old. Mr. Gompers, the labour member of the Council of National Defence, controlled neither officially nor in practice the bulk of labour. The Government departments consequently started each in its own

watertight compartment to evolve a policy for wages and employment. There was no concerted or, in most cases, far-seeing policy. One department would bid against another in the labour market. Housing problems,



EX-PRESIDENT TAFT AND  
PRESIDENT WILSON.

especially in connexion with the shipyards that sprang up in such numbers during that year, were neglected. The tackling of dilution and other war problems went almost by default. It was not, in fact, until May, 1918, that, after various false starts, a central War Labour Administration was formed under Mr. Felix Frankfurter, a young lawyer admirably fitted for the post by a close study of labour conditions and by previous experience in various Government posts. By then, as already indicated, the sudden realization of the tremendous gravity of the war, coupled with a decided tendency on the part of employers to ameliorate labour conditions, had begun to have its effect. In New England, which at first had more than its share of the casualty lists, the atmosphere improved by leaps and bounds. On the Pacific Coast the taint of pro-Germanism had begun to discredit the I.W.W., and the lumber employers had been persuaded by the Government to better labour conditions. In other parts of the country a rather general rise in wages and the appearance of a tendency to recognize unions as inevitable and the workers as being entitled to exceptional privileges while under the pressure of war work, combined with the discovery of the German menace to the world, worked improvement. Another factor that made for improvement was the work of ex-President Taft, who had been

placed by Mr. Wilson at the head of a Board the chief functions of which were to bring labour and capital into more sympathetic contact.

All this made it, by June 19, 1918, sufficiently obvious that the United States was both spiritually and materially rapidly getting into her war stride.

By the early summer of 1918 the American Navy was doing all that could be asked of it. A considerable army was in being on both sides of the Atlantic. Preparations were under way for the almost indefinite increase of the army and a considerable increase of the navy. A Bill was before Congress to expend about



MR. WM. G. McADOO,  
Secretary of the Treasury, Administrator of  
Railways.

\$1,500,000,000 upon the navy. Another Bill was before Congress for the expenditure of the colossal sum of about \$12,000,000,000 upon the army. This, it was explained in the report of the member introducing the measure into the House, was intended to support an army of a minimum strength of 3,000,000, but without any limit as to its maximum strength. On May 16, 1918, the establishment of the army was 140,130 officers and 1,506,152 men. This, however, did not include 380,000 men called up in April and May. On July 3 it was announced that there were 160,400 officers and 2,010,000 men with the Colours.

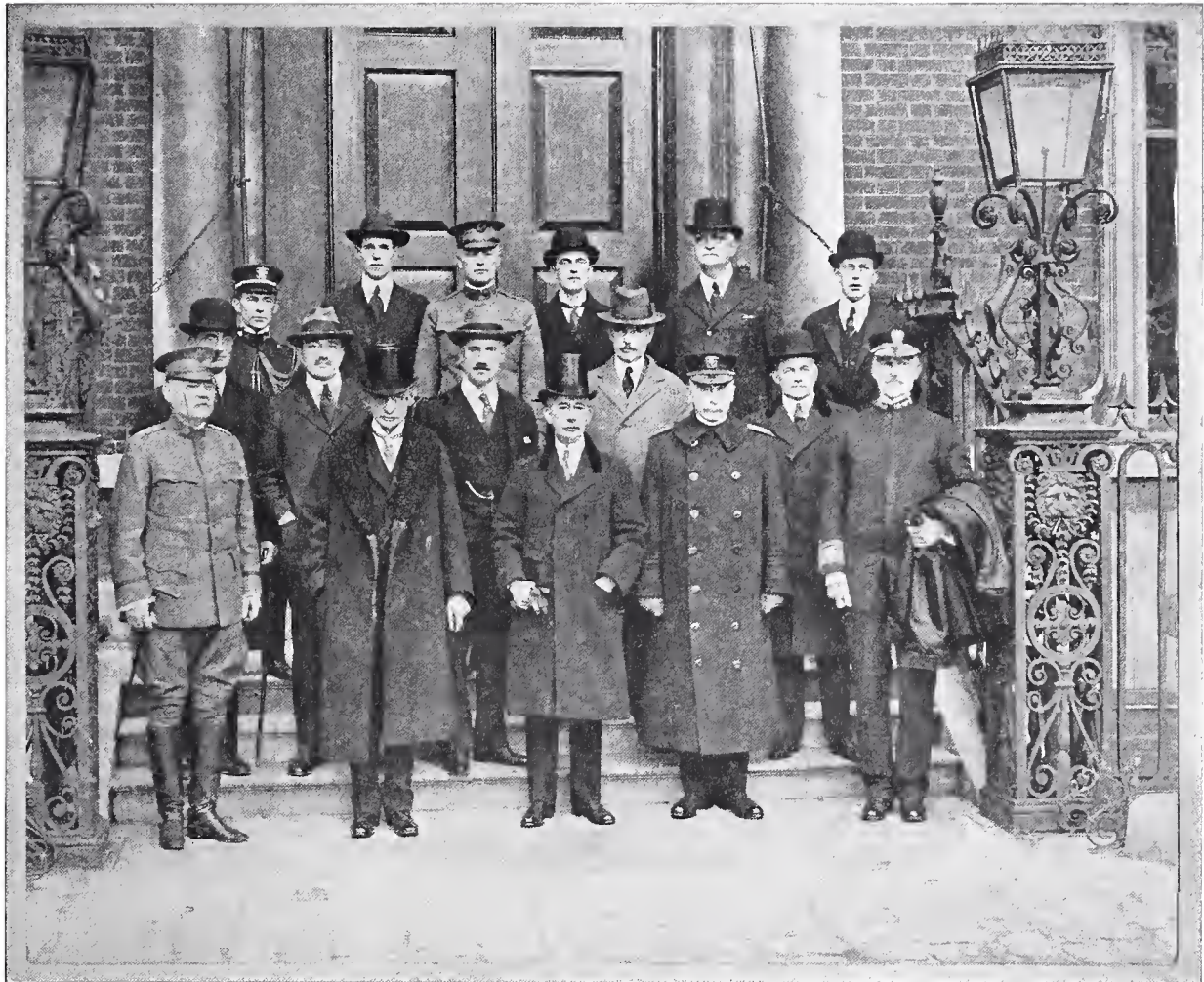
The purpose of Congress was accentuated by



measures taken to extend the scope of the "draft." Under the law of April, 1917, the age for military service was 21 to 31 years. Under this law there had been in the following summer 9,586,508 registrants. Of these, 3,682,949 had been called in the first quota and 1,057,363 accepted. At the same rate the uncalled classes in April, 1918, would have produced not far short of 2,000,000 men. What with

had something to do with the continuance of her desperate efforts to break the Allied armies already in the field.

The resources of the nation were at the same time becoming better and better mobilized. Industries were being rapidly placed upon a war footing. Finance, as shown above, was already there. Both in Washington and throughout the country a real war spirit was



#### AMERICAN WAR MISSION IN LONDON.

Col. House stands in the centre of the front row. The group includes Admiral W. S. Benson, General Tasker H. Bliss, Dr. Alonzo E. Taylor, and Messrs. Oscar T. Crosby, Vance McCormick, Bainbridge Colby, T. Nelson Perkins, and Gordon Auchincloss.

men reaching the age of 21, an army little short of 5,000,000 (including the old voluntary force) could have been reckoned upon under the existing law. Amendments to it were, of course, prompted partly by considerations of industrial mobilization, but even so the fact that a draft law producing potentially 5,000,000 was a year after its enactment deemed by many people not prolific enough (one Cabinet Minister spoke at the time of an army of 12,000,000 and the President's fine utterance in the sense of indefinite expansion has already been noted) must have been giving Germany "furiously to think," and may have

growing day by day. In April, 1918, President Wilson heartened the Allies by one of the finest pieces of self-subordination that the head of any nation has ever laid upon the altar of any alliance. If once more Great Britain sacrificed the interests of her trade and the volume of her food imports by supplying a large proportion of the tonnage needed to take American troops to France, she found herself paid back with interest. Contrary, it was believed at the time, to the wishes of some of his chief military advisers, he sacrificed the unity of his army to the emergency and authorized the conclusion of an agreement





U.S.A. TROOPS MARCHING PAST BUCKINGHAM PALACE, AUGUST 15, 1917.

The King and Queen Alexandra are standing on the right of the picture.

whereby American troops were to be temporarily merged in small units with the veterans of France and Great Britain. The object of this was, of course, to ensure the speediest possible use of American reinforcements in stemming the German attacks. The result of this decision was speedily noticeable. American troops had for more than six months been holding small sectors in quiet parts of the front, notably near Toul, their engineers had more than once fought gallantly with British troops against surprise attacks, but in the battles between Soissons and the Marne at the beginning of June large contingents of them were able to win notable laurels in helping to stay the German advance. Their effectiveness, indeed, called forth the especial thanks of the Supreme War Council to Mr. Wilson.

Neither the country nor Congress were far behind Mr. Wilson. While the troops were hurrying to Europe, Congress "did its bit" by giving the President the two measures for the further consolidation of the powers that it had fought so stubbornly in the winter. It passed successively the Overman Bill and the Bill establishing a Government Board for the financing of business enterprises useful to the war and the prevention of "useless" enterprises. It passed an adequate sedition law which had been hanging fire even longer. It consented against the first judgment of its members to continue in session during the summer and pass the second war taxation measure, with its great increases of revenue, ready for the ensuing winter. It stayed its attacks upon the Aircraft Board and other supposedly weak links in the Government in response to a promise by the President to see to it that the necessary investigations were made.

The country acquiesced without a murmur in emergency measures which a year previously would have made people's hair stand on end. Having submitted to the draft and having adequately supported Mr. Hoover's economies, it accepted with alacrity Mr. McAdoo's drastic handling of the railways with all the inconveniences of crowded and more expensive travel and higher freight rates. It accepted the tightening of the draft regulations to exclude from "useless industries" all eligible men. It accepted in the interests of tonnage economies import and export restrictions that were bound to mutilate many lines of its trade almost as badly as British commerce had been injured by British war trade regulations. A



tremendous rise in commodity prices did not prejudice the success of the Third Liberty Loan or generous contributions to the Red Cross and other charities. There came about simultaneously a growing intolerance of everything that savoured of a German bias. Even in outlying districts of the West, remote from the reverberations of the war, refusal to subscribe generously to the Third Liberty Loan was pointedly regarded as being a distinctly

and that complete victory was absolutely essential for the safety and decency of the whole world, including the United States.

Despite the agitation of the Irish and the covert but none the less assiduous propaganda which Germany still kept up, especially among other non-Anglo-Saxon races, despite the physical immensity and divergencies of the country, the people of the United States were beginning to find themselves a world-nation.

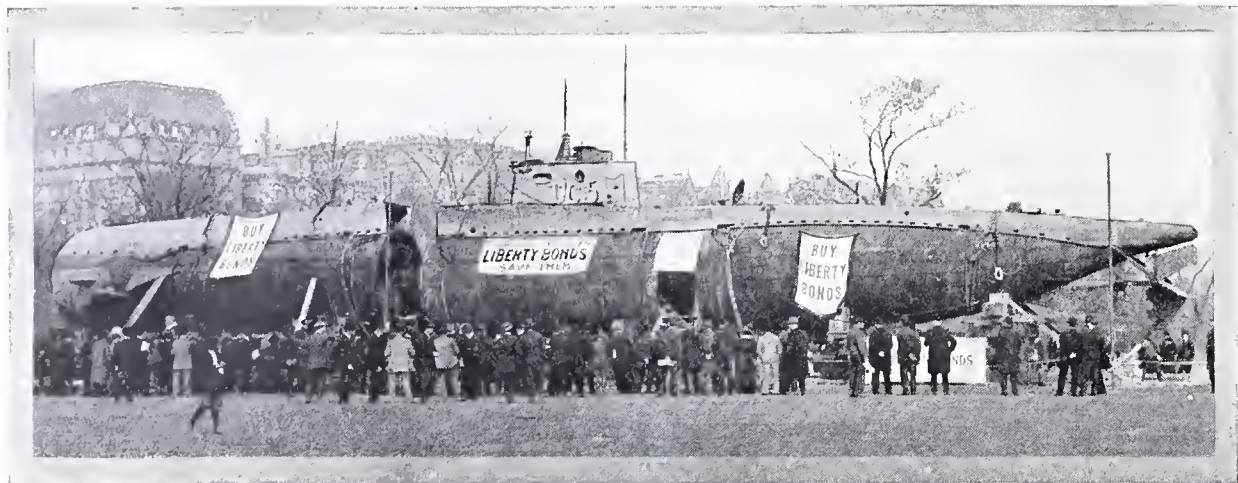


#### THE 4th OF JULY, 1917, IN PARIS.

The American Colours at the Invalides on Independence Day, the first detachment of American Troops, having landed in France on June 25th.

Teutonic trait. A movement grew up against the German-printed Press and to prevent the teaching of German in schools. An attempt was made to boycott even so powerful a newspaper proprietor as Mr. Hearst by communities which, rightly or wrongly, suspected his Americanism. In some communities the courts were freely invoked against suspects. The period of perfunctory patriotism and of perfunctory interest in the war so plainly noticeable a year earlier was in fact closing. The shock of the German advances and things like the growing frequency of bombing raids on hospitals were rapidly convincing people that self-respect and loyalty to the Allies demanded an adequate war effort,

They were beginning to take pride in the discovery that there are more stimulating destinies than the destiny of comfortable if powerful isolation, and that the call of a twentieth-century President to serve and save humanity could make the blood course more generously than service of a doctrine laid down by his predecessor of the eighteenth century, a doctrine which it was rightly felt, could he have come back, he would have been the first to eschew. It was realized that the days were for ever gone when the American continent could safely and in all circumstances enjoy its ideals of democracy behind the shield of a doctrine based fundamentally upon the forbearance and decency of all European Powers.



#### A GERMAN SUBMARINE CAPTURED BY THE BRITISH

Cut into sections and drawn through the streets of New York to advertise "Liberty Bonds."

With these discoveries came a change of the most hopeful augury for the future of the world. Everything was tending to bring the United States and the British Empire closer together than they had ever been. One of the most interesting and convincing signs of that was the rapid growth of a movement to revise the school histories of the country. It was discovered that many of them were at least unfair in their treatment of the American Revolution and subsequent Anglo-American incidents from the war of 1812 downwards. The opinion long held in thoughtful circles grew by leaps and bounds that to their distortion of facts must be due to no small extent the anti-British traditions upon which enemies of the Empire, from Count Bernstorff down to the meanest Fenian or Sinn Fein tub-thumper, had often played with all too much success. Another sign of the change was the fact that in the spring of 1918 American opinion had ceased to regard the troubles in Ireland only through glasses of purely Hibernian manufacture.

The change was due to the healthiest of causes—better mutual understanding. It started with Mr. Balfour's Mission. As a venture for the furtherance of immediate practical co-operation the mission may not have been altogether successful; but of its educative value there could be no shadow of doubt.

All through the ensuing year the leaven that had been implanted in the American imagination worked steadily. Its working was visible in the Press and in the utterances of public men. The Germans helped the movement on by constantly adding to the object lessons why the free institutions of

the United States and Great Britain would never be safe so long as Prussia remained unerushed. It cannot, of course, be said that old prejudices against England were snuffed out overnight. Even at the end of the period with which this chapter deals they still cropped up in expected places, especially in the provincial districts of the United States. There were still occasional references to British selfishness or ineptitude. Temperance was at the time making great strides in the United States, and some of those who favoured it were inclined to make a grievance out of the fact that England still made into beer some of the grain which the United States was economizing to send her. There was still perhaps a tendency to scrutinize somewhat jealously British achievements in the field. There were complaints when Sir Douglas Haig was driven back from St. Quentin that the British had unduly weakened the line and "let the French down" because they were keeping in England a large force for their own reasons. Too little credit was perhaps given in the popular mind to the great sacrifice in ships, and therefore in trade and comfort, that Great Britain had made, and was making, for the Allies and for the United States. There still lurked in some minds a suspicion that the war-trade policy of the Empire had been conceived and was being conducted with one eye upon after-the-war opportunities.

That sort of thing was partly due to a fast-dying tradition, and partly to the British habit of silence and self-depreciation. It did not represent the main current of opinion, and still less the views of those responsible for American policy. There can be little doubt that after the object lesson before Amiens and the



Channel ports and between the Aisne and the Marne of the endurance of Germany's strength and the ruthlessness of her ambitions, the minds of many of those whose business it was to think of such things turned quite naturally to speculation as to whether intimate relations of a permanent order between the United States and England might not be the only way to save the freedom of the world.

The *rapprochement* was being carried on by many tangible factors. The perfect amalgamation and co-operation between the British and American Navies was one; contact between the two armies was another. One of the features of American life in 1917-1918 was the influx of British officers and men, not only into New York and other big towns, but into all parts of the country. Two great British military missions, with branches all over the country, were established. There was the training mission which had a detachment of officers and men working with similar detachments from a similar French mission to help in the training of men and officers in the sixteen huge training camps scattered over the

continent from New England to California. There were the British and Canadian recruiting missions with branches in all great towns. The object of the recruiting mission was to collect volunteers for the Imperial Army, pending the signature of a treaty which would enable Washington to draft British subjects who had not volunteered under the American Draft Law (21-30 years), but under the law of that part of the Empire to which the British subject belonged. At the beginning of June, 1918, the treaty was on the point of ratification, the recruiting mission having in the meanwhile gained over 30,000 volunteers.

The influence upon public opinion of the officers of these two missions, some three or four hundred in all, to say nothing of the hundreds of other officers who from members of highly expert missions like the artillery mission downwards had been detailed to the United States to help in the production and purchase of supplies, was very great. Another powerful influence was the experience of the soldiers in Europe. Generals and privates by word of mouth or by letter



A BRITISH TANK ON A CRUISE IN NEW YORK  
To stimulate investment in "Liberty Bonds."





#### HOISTING THE STARS AND STRIPES AND THE UNION JACK TOGETHER

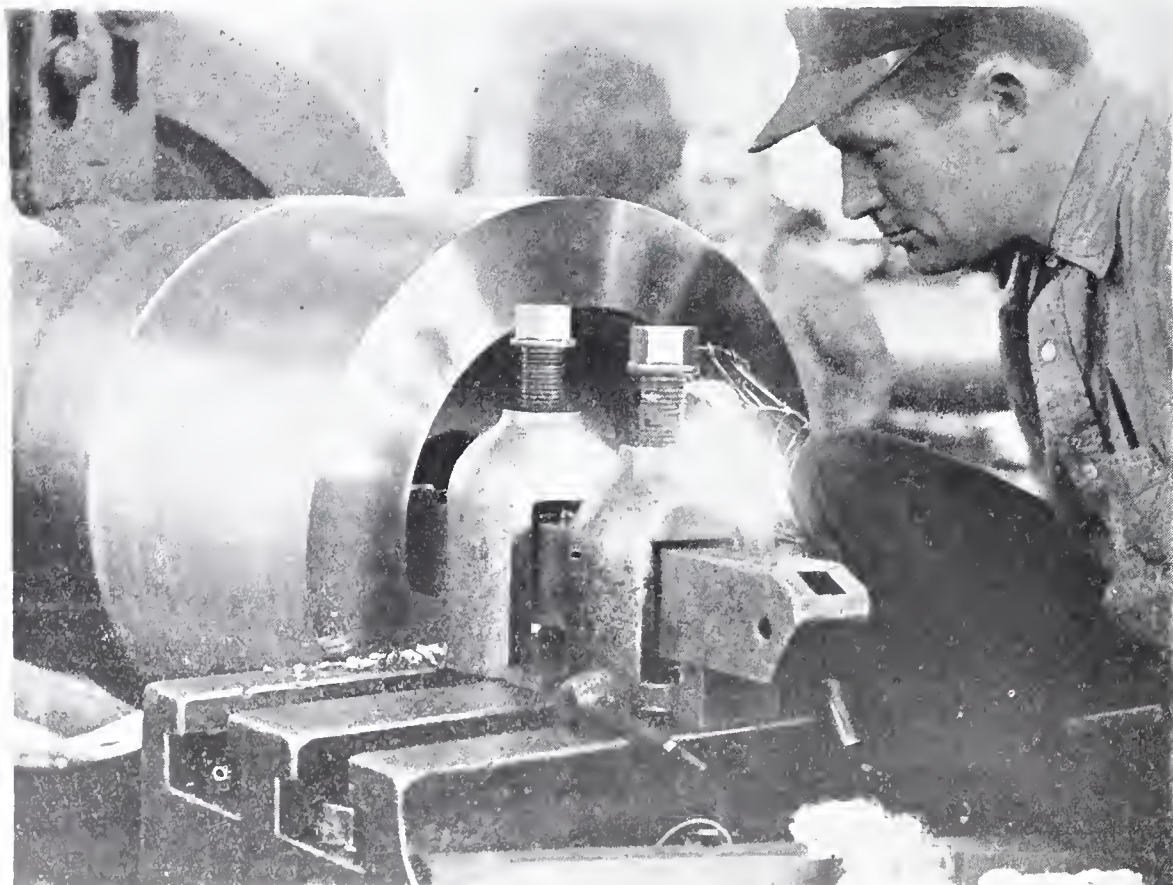
For the first time, on the Victoria Tower, House of Lords, July 4, 1917.

showed themselves as pleasurably impressed by British efficiency and comradeship as the

British armies in France and the British peoples at home were with the American troops who were arriving among them in ever-increasing numbers.

A happy interchange of official representatives was another thing that helped to mould a new Anglo-American opinion. In London Colonel E. M. House won golden opinions for himself and his staff when in the autumn of 1917 he repaid as the President's special commissioner the visit to Washington of Mr. Balfour, and both in London and Paris did much quiet preparation for that close relationship between the Allies on the one hand and between the United States and the Allies on the other which was happily consummated under the pressure of the German offensives. Admiral Sims, permanently in Europe as the commander of the American naval forces, admirably seconded the no less valuable work of Mr. Page, the American Ambassador, who continued in London as the representative of an Ally the excellent record that he had achieved as the representative of a neutral. Indeed, Mr. Page played a part in the diplomacy of the war which was of the very greatest value both to his own country and the common cause.

The choice of British officials for the United



BORING THE BREACH OF A GUN.



States was equally happy. As soon as she entered the war it was realized that British representation in the United States would need strengthening. It was not that the Ambassador, Sir Cecil Spring Rice, had failed. But to the diplomatic work that he had carried on while the United States was neutral was added, when the United States entered the war, a vast amount of commercial and technical work. A War Mission was organized in the early summer of 1917 partly to deal with British purchases and partly to act as advisers to various branches of the American Government. The first head of the War Mission, which had a staff running well into four figures, was Lord Northcliffe, whose career and personality had long before made him among Americans one of the most popular and respected of British public figures. In the autumn of 1917 Lord

could have been made for the arduous double task that awaited him in Washington. He came not only with the prestige of his high office in England but also with the advantage of having already on his previous mission to the United States won the respect and friendship of the American officials with whom he had to deal. The appointment as ambassador to Washington



[Bassano.]

**ADMIRAL SIMS,**  
Commander-in-Chief of U.S.A. Naval Forces in Europe.

Reading visited Washington to settle on behalf of the British Government some rather difficult financial problems. In February, 1918, Lord Reading reappeared in the dual rôle of Ambassador and Lord High Commissioner. His appointment was due to the retirement of Sir Cecil Spring Rice, who died a few weeks later in Canada, and to Lord Northcliffe's assumption, after a most useful stay of four months in the United States, of other important duties in London.

No better choice than that of Lord Reading



**COL. E. M. HOUSE,**  
President Wilson's friend and Counsellor. Head of the Mission to Europe in 1917.

of the Lord Chief Justice was moreover taken by the American people as a greater compliment than the appointment of any diplomatist *de carrière* could have been. The ability with which he handled the different problems that crowded upon him in the spring of 1918, and the inspiring nature of the few public addresses which he made were perhaps of more value than was generally realized, not only in the cementing of a permanent Anglo-American *rapprochement* but in bridging over the difficult days of the first quarter of 1918.

Those days, however, were, as this chapter has shown, of short duration. More than once it was the pleasant task of Lord Reading to convey to the American Government and people the thanks of the British Government and peoples for help promptly and effectively given during the dark months when Germany was striving to break France and Great Britain before American intervention could become decisive.

There are eastern lands where, as night draws to a close, the skies are lighted by a wondrous herald of the coming day. For a space, earth and heaven are resplendent with the semblance





[French official photograph.]

## NEW ARRIVALS AT THE AMERICAN CAMP ON THE AISNE, 1918.

of the dawn. Nature has no sight lovelier and none more deceiving. Soon the fair vision fades, and night and darkness resume their sway. Their reign is brief. Light gathers anew, and the sun rises in glory to quicken and to bless.

When the Great Republic drew her sword, her people and all the free peoples of the world lifted their hearts with gladness at the coming of the day. Their eyes, they cried, saw arrayed against the powers of evil the resistless might appointed to crush its head. They were not wrong. The day was coming, but they mistook for the true dawn her fleeting harbinger. As

those primal glories faded, the hearts of many grew chill. After the fair light, the gloom was hard to bear. But those who knew bade them have no fear. Patience, the day was surely at hand.

In 1918 the day breaks. The sun is above the mountains. The mists disperse; all influences malign pale before him. He has still to climb the heaven. He has still to put forth his full majesty and might. But henceforth he pursues his ordained course, resistless, unwearying, beneficent to all. *Incipient magni procedere menses*. America is in the war.





## CHAPTER CCXLV.

# VICTORIA CROSSES OF THE WAR. (V.)

“COME ON, THE TIGERS!”—ANOTHER SURGEON RECIPIENT—A BRAVE DAFADAR—THE EPISODE OF THE SPIKED STICK—EXCEPTIONAL COOLNESS—A CANADIAN’S FINE EXPLOIT—STRIPPED TO BANDOLIER AND RIFLE—“PILL-BOX” ACHIEVEMENTS—A LANCER AS STRETCHER-BEARER—WOUNDED OFFICER’S DEED—RUSHING “NESTS” OF MACHINE-GUNS—A SCOTS GUARDSMAN’S CROSS—A COLONEL’S GALLANTRY—LIEUT.-COL. ELLIOTT-COOPER, D.S.O., M.C.—“FIGHTING TO THE LAST”—A TANK COMMANDER’S BRAVERY—A GRENADIER GUARDS’ OFFICER’S HEROISM—POST-HUMOUS HONOURS—AEROPLANE FIRE—A TENACIOUS SERGEANT—A TRIUMPHANT RIFLEMAN—THE LONDON REGIMENT—MARVELLOUS BOMB-THROWING—CAPTAIN MCCUDDEN—LORD ROTHERMERE AND AERODROME WORKERS—CASUALTIES TO V.C. RECIPIENTS—A MACHINE-GUNNER’S DEFENCE—A V.C. HERO IN CO-OPERATION—KILLED AFTER SIX DAYS’ FIGHTING—TWO AIRMEN’S “OUTSTANDING BRAVERY”—COLONEL ANDERSON’S FEARLESS LEADING—SECOND-LIEUT. CASSIDY’S LAST STAND—ANOTHER AEROPLANE ATTACK—A SINGLE-HANDED CHARGE—A COLONEL’S INSPIRATION OF BRITISH AND ALLIED TROOPS—THE FIRST A.S.C. RECIPIENT IN THE WAR—“TO HELL WITH SURRENDER!”—ANOTHER GRENADIER GUARDS’ OFFICER RECIPIENT—THE LAST TO LEAVE—PERILOUS MESSAGE-CARRYING—LIEUT.-COL. JAMES FORBES-ROBERTSON’S HIGH COURAGE—A NAVAL CROSS.

MANY regimental records contain brave stories of the way in which British soldiers have been rallied in battle by their leaders. There was the immortal inspiration of “Die hard, my men, die hard!” uttered by the colonel of the 57th at Albuera; and in the Great War there were many instances of a gallant lead being set by an appeal to the *esprit de corps* of a regiment—in no case was that appeal more successful than when it was made in a cherished nickname. Such an illustration was given by Philip Eric Bent, D.S.O., of the Leicestershire Regiment, an officer who held the strange official rank of “Second Lieut. (Temp. Lieut.-Col.).” Lieut.-Col. Bent was one of 18 recipients of the Cross whose records were published on January 11, 1918, and of whom no fewer than six were members of the Canadian

forces. He furnished another instance of the cool leadership and inspiring example, that true and simple “valour” for which the Cross was solely given. Here again there is no opportunity of describing any outstanding personal exploit—only of recording consistent courage, stern resolution, and the setting of an example which resulted in securing part of a line which was most important to later operations. Lieut.-Col. Bent had shown repeatedly how high the courage was that filled him; he had passed that courage on to those who depended on him for guidance and example, and he crowned the exhibition of it when, in leading a charge, he inspired his men with the cry of, “Come on, the Tigers!” using the treasured nickname of the old 17th Foot who became the Leicestershire Regiment. A few weeks after that rallying-call was uttered there were

to be further displays of wondrous courage by these same "Tigers."

Two brief records amongst the 18 related to Captain John Fox Russell, M.C., R.A.M.C., and L/Dafadar Gobind Singh, Indian Cavalry. Captain Russell, who was the ninth member of the Royal Army Medical Corps (the nine including Martin Leake and Chavasse, recipients of Bars to their Crosses) to win the Cross in the war, was attached to the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and his honour was awarded for "most conspicuous bravery displayed in action until he was killed." Repeatedly he went out to attend the wounded under "murderous fire" from snipers and machine-guns, and in many cases where no other means were at hand he carried them in himself, although he was almost exhausted. The native officer greatly distinguished himself by three volunteering to carry messages between the regiment and brigade headquarters, a distance of a mile and a half, over open ground which was under the observa-



L/DAFADAR GOBIND SINGH,  
Indian Cavalry.

tion and heavy fire of the enemy. He delivered his messages, although on each of the three occasions his horse was shot and he was forced to finish his journey on foot. On February 6, 1918, Dafadar Gobind Singh received his Cross from the King at Buckingham Palace, and subsequently, with ten other Indian cavalry officers who were visiting London as the guests of the nation, he attended a reception by the National Indian Association. General Sir

O'Moore Creagh, V.C., late Commander-in-Chief in India, presided. The general, when a captain, Bombay Staff Corps, had been awarded the Cross for his heroic defence of a village on the Cabul River nearly 39 years previously. He pointed out that of the nine Victoria Crosses so far awarded to Indians in



CAPTAIN JOHN FOX RUSSELL, R.A.M.C.

connexion with the war this was the second to be won by the gallant Rahator Rajputs, the tribe to which Maharaja Sir Pertab Singh belonged; and it was the first award to an officer of the Imperial Service troops. He added that the dafadar began his Army career in the Jodhpur Lancers and was transferred to the 28th Cavalry, and said that since the ancient days of the Mahabharata the Rajputs had ever been ready to sacrifice their lives for the honour of their King and country. An address in Hindustani was read and presented to the dafadar, who also received a piece of plate subscribed for by friends and handed to him by a six-year-old godson of the Maharaja of Bikanir, who was dressed in the uniform of a Rajput officer. The dafadar was also presented with an inscribed gold watch and was garlanded. Maharaja Sir Pertab Singh, who was present, expressed his pride that another kinsman of his had won the Cross, and declared that it was a proud day for the Rahator Rajputs, all of whom would warmly appreciate the tribute of the ex-Commander-in-Chief. This pleasant and enthusiastic ceremony was a picturesque addition to the more prosaic gatherings at which



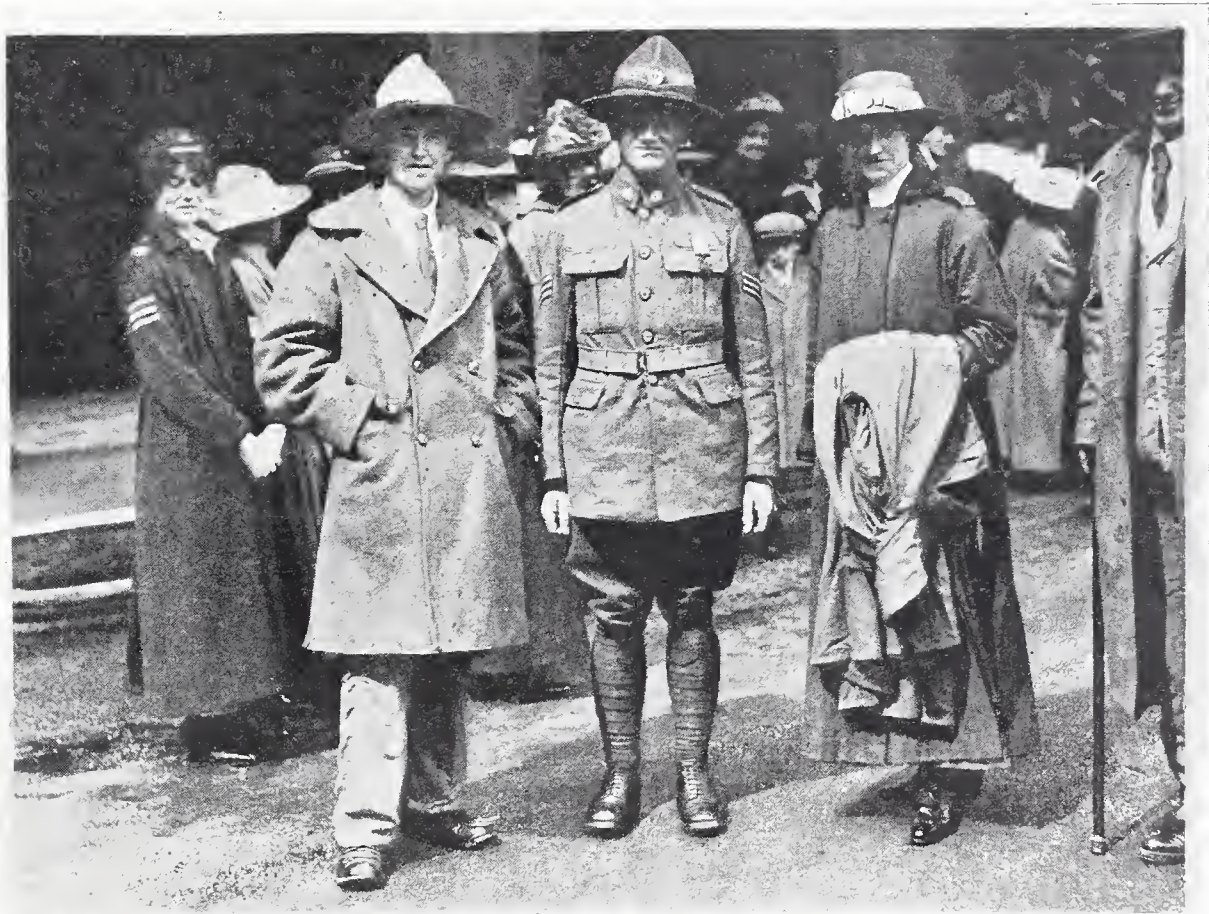
presentations had been made to British recipients of the Cross.

Uncommon circumstances attended the award to Lieutenant (Temp. Captain) Robert Gee, M.C., Royal Fusiliers. A strong enemy force had pierced our line and captured a brigade headquarters and ammunition dump. Gee found himself a prisoner, but so little to his liking was the prospect of captivity in Germany, and so determined was he to regain his liberty, that he fell upon the enemy with his spiked stick, killed one of them, and through the unex-

pectedness, surprise, and resolution of his onslaught managed to escape. He then organized a party of the brigade staff, and with this he fiercely attacked the enemy, closely followed and supported by two companies of infantry. By his own bravery and prompt action he, aided by his orderlies, cleared the locality. The captain then established a defensive flank on the outskirts of a village, and, finding that an enemy machine-gun was still in action, he, with a revolver in each hand, and followed by one man, rushed and captured it, killing eight of the crew. At this time he was wounded, but refused to have the wound dressed until he was satisfied that the defence was organized. On July 11,

1918, Leicester gave a public reception to Captain Gee, to whom the Mayor presented a gold watch and chain.

In its essentials Gee's exploit was single-handed; and practically single-handed also was the achievement for which the Cross was awarded to Private Henry James Nicholas, New Zealand Infantry, who captured a strong position and by doing so saved many casualties. He was one of a Lewis gun section, and his valour and coolness were officially described as exceptional. He rushed forward alone,



SERGT. NICHOLAS, N.Z. INF., LEAVES THE PALACE.

pectedness, surprise, and resolution of his onslaught managed to escape. He then organized a party of the brigade staff, and with this he fiercely attacked the enemy, closely followed and supported by two companies of infantry. By his own bravery and prompt action he, aided by his orderlies, cleared the locality. The captain then established a defensive flank on the outskirts of a village, and, finding that an enemy machine-gun was still in action, he, with a revolver in each hand, and followed by one man, rushed and captured it, killing eight of the crew. At this time he was wounded, but refused to have the wound dressed until he was satisfied that the defence was organized. On July 11,

about 25 yards ahead of his section; shot an officer who was in command of a strong point, and with bombs and bayonet overcame the rest of the garrison of 16, adding to the splendour of this achievement by capturing four wounded prisoners and a machine-gun. The New Zealander was not content with what he had done—he subsequently, when the advance had reached its limit, performed the most valuable task of collecting ammunition doing this under heavy machine-gun and rifle fire.

It had become a matter of course to read and speak of the astonishing deeds of officers and men who had come from overseas to take their



stand side by side with the home troops. Such courage and enterprise were displayed and such amazing readiness to seize a favourable opportunity was shown, that there remained no obvious outlet for fresh energy, yet such openings were found by men like Private James Peter Robertson, of the Canadian Infantry, whose acts gave him a high place on the roll of fame. Uncut wire and a machine gun had held up Robertson's platoon and made it suffer heavily, whereupon Robert-



**LIEUT. (Temp. CAPTAIN) ROBERT GEE,**  
Royal Fusiliers.

son dashed to an opening on the flank, rushed the gun, and after a desperate struggle with the crew killed four and then turned the gun on the rest. The result of such an onslaught was inevitable—the survivors, dismayed by the attack, fled towards their own lines. This valiant pioneer had paved a way and his platoon advanced so effectively that Robertson was able to punish the enemy still more severely; then, carrying the captured gun, he led his platoon to the final objective. There he selected an excellent position, and, getting the weapon into action, he fired on the retreating and utterly demoralized enemy. While the consolidation went on Robertson's resolute use of the gun kept down the fire of the enemy snipers, his courage inspiring his comrades to "the finest efforts." So far this magnificent Canadian had escaped death, but that was soon to overtake him. The end, however,

came doubtless as he would have wished it to come—certainly to his lasting honour and glory, for he was killed just as he returned with the second of two of our snipers who were badly wounded in front of one of our trenches, and whom he had gone out, under very heavy fire, to carry in.

Another Canadian—Private Cecil John Kinross, Canadian Infantry—showed astonishing courage during prolonged and very severe operations, and throughout a whole day he displayed "marvellous coolness," "fighting with the utmost aggressiveness" against heavy odds until he was seriously wounded. A very severe mixed fire checked the advance of his company, but Kinross, so far from regarding this hold-up as a cause for ceasing operations, renewed the gallant efforts he had been making. He carefully surveyed the situation, then deliberately divested himself of all his equipment, except his rifle and bandolier, and so cleared for action he advanced alone over the open ground, in broad daylight, charged an enemy machine-gun which was firing destructively, killed the crew of six, and seized and destroyed the gun. This display of spirit roused the company to such energy that they



[Canadian War Records.]

**LIEUT. (Acting CAPTAIN) C. P. J. O'KELLY,**  
Canadian Infantry.

were able to make a further advance of 300 yards and establish a highly important position. Kinross continued to display remarkable valour until his wounds compelled him to desist. No other V.C. record of the war had indicated quite the same cool, deliberate preparation for a final effort as this stripping to the bandolier and rifle.

By this time "pill-boxes" had become estab-



lished as centres of fierce fighting, and in any considerable batch of Victoria Cross awards it was almost certain that some of the honours would be given for "pill-box" achievements. Of the 18 cases under consideration three were of this description, and it was an interesting circumstance that all three recipients were members of the Canadian forces—Lieutenant (Acting Captain) Christopher Patrick John O'Kelly, M.C., Canadian Infantry; Sergeant George Harry Mullin, M.M., Canadian Infantry; and Private Thomas William Holmes, Canadian Mounted Rifles. O'Kelly showed "extraordinary skill and determination" and uncommon daring in all he did. An original attack had failed, and two companies of his unit had launched a new attack. Under heavy fire and without any artillery barrage O'Kelly

a heavy bombardment and was not only causing severe casualties to our troops but also holding up an attack. First Mullin made a dash at a sniper's post in front and destroyed the garrison with bombs; then, crawling on to the top of the "pill-box," he shot the two machine-guns with his revolver, after which he rushed to another entrance and forced the garrison of 10 to surrender. The marvel was not that the sergeant's clothing was "riddled by bullets," as it was, but that the sergeant himself was not almost blown to pieces by the rapid fire that was directed at him; yet he seemed to bear a charmed life and helped to save a situation and numerous lives. The extraordinary performance was witnessed by many spectators.

Holmes's act bore a strong resemblance to Mullin's, for he also worked single-handed and



PRIVATE C. J. KINROSS,  
Canadian Infantry.

SERGT. G. H. MULLIN,  
Canadian Infantry.

PRIVATE T. W. HOLMES,  
Canadian Mounted Rifles.

advanced his command over 1,000 yards, stormed and took the enemy positions on the crest of a hill, and then personally organized and led a series of attacks against "pill-boxes" with such courage and success that his company alone captured six of these structures with 100 prisoners and six machine-guns. This dazzling exploit was augmented later in the afternoon, when, under his inspiring leadership, O'Kelly's company repelled a strong counter-attack and took more prisoners, and during the night captured a hostile raiding party of one officer and 10 men, with a machine-gun.

Mullin's was one of those astounding performances which looked like reckless escapades, and were perhaps successful only because of their complete audacity and the inability of an enemy to realize that they were seriously meant. The sergeant was single-handed, yet he unhesitatingly rushed upon and captured a commanding "pill-box" which had withstood

ran forward to a "pill-box" strong point from which a destructive mixed fire was causing serious casualties. By throwing two bombs he killed and wounded the crews of two machine-guns, then he returned to his comrades and secured another bomb. Again rushing forward alone under heavy fire he threw the bomb into the entrance of the "pill-box," causing the 19 occupants to surrender.

Another Canadian Mounted Rifleman, Captain (Acting Major) George Randolph Pearkes, M.C., carried on gallantly, although he was wounded in the thigh just before an important advance. In spite of his wound and many obstacles he continued to lead his men, and by tenaciously holding to his purposes and showing an utter contempt of personal danger he achieved far more than the task which had been allotted to him. His success, with a small body of men, against great odds, was due to his "wonderful powers of control and leading."

Completing the list of Canadians amongst the 18 awards was Corporal Colin Barron, Canadian Infantry, another doer of remarkable individual things. He rushed three machine-guns single-handed, killed four of the crew, and captured the rest; then, with great initiative and skill, he turned one of the captured weapons on the retiring enemy and caused them severe



[Canadian War Records.]

**CAPTAIN (Acting MAJOR) G. R. PEARKE,**  
Canadian Mounted Rifles.

casualties. Barron had opened fire on the three guns from a flank at point-blank range, and his act produced far-reaching results.

Full opportunity of showing their splendid qualities as mounted men had not been open to the British cavalry for a long period, but in other ways they proved their sterling worth. Amongst those who greatly distinguished themselves was Private George William Clare (Plumstead), of the Lancers, who performed heroic deeds as a stretcher-bearer and won lasting renown before he met a soldier's death. During an intense and continuous enemy bombardment he dressed and conducted wounded over the open to a dressing station about 500 yards away. But saving wounded, glorious and humane though the work was, did not satisfy the soldierly ambition of the dismounted horseman. There was a detached post some 150 yards out in the open, of which all the garrison had become casualties. Seeing this state of things, Clare crossed the fire-swept intervening space, and having dressed all the cases he manned the post single-handed till relief could be sent—an act of outstanding resource and bravery; then he carried a

seriously wounded man through intense fire to cover, and later succeeded in getting him to the dressing station. When he reached the dressing station Clare was told that the enemy were using gas shells to a large extent in a valley below. The wind was blowing the deadly product towards a line of trenches and occupied shell-holes, and so this unconquerable soldier, who had already risked so much, started on the right of the line and personally warned every company post of the danger. During the whole of this time he was under shell and rifle fire. So far he had had many escapes, but subsequently he was killed by a shell.

Wounded during a very heavy bombardment and afterwards receiving two further wounds, Second Lieutenant (Acting Captain) Arthur Moore Lascelles, Durham Light Infantry, set a fine example of courage, resolution, and self-sacrifice by refusing to have his wounds dressed and persisting in his duty. When his trench had been captured and several of his men made prisoners the captain instantly jumped on to the parapet, and, followed by the rest of his company, numbering only 12, rushed across under very heavy machine-gun fire and drove more than 60 of the enemy back, saving a most



**CORPORAL COLIN BARRON,**  
Canadian Infantry.

critical situation. With untiring energy Lascelles reorganized the position, but shortly afterwards the enemy again attacked and captured both the trench and him; though later he had the good fortune to escape and the pride to learn that his conduct had been rewarded with the Cross.

That overmastering spirit of the "lone hand" which had possessed so many of the



recipients of the honour enabled Sergeant Charles Edward Spackman, Border Regiment (Fulham) to work by himself across fire-swept and absolutely coverless ground towards a machine-gun whose fire made it impossible for



**SERGEANT C. E. SPACKMAN,**  
Border Regt.

troops to advance. The sergeant at last, going through the fire, reached the gun and killed all but one of the crew; then he rushed the weapon and took it single-handed and so cleared the way for his company to advance. That was a case of a rush, and a very fine one, at an individual weapon; but Lance-Corporal Robert McBeath, Scaforth Highlanders (Kinlochbervie, Lairg, Sutherland), sought conflict with "a nest" of machine-guns. These the enemy had placed in the western outskirts of a village, and they were firing on the Highlander's unit and a unit on his right and doing serious mischief and checking the advance. A Lewis gun was called for to deal with this virulent "nest," and McBeath volunteered for the duty of handling it. Alone he at once moved off with the gun and his revolver, and having located one of the "nest" he worked towards it and shot the gunner. Then he found several other hostile machine-guns in action and these he attacked with the help of a tank. A Highlander in himself, when armed with a Lewis gun, was no welcome sight to any hostile band, and still less pleasant was the advent of reinforcement in the shape of a tank. The end was almost inevitable—the gunners were driven to ground in a deep dug-out, and McBeath, reckless of the peril that menaced him, rushed in after them. On the steps an opponent offered opposition; him the Highlander shot,

and driving the rest of the garrison from the dug-out he captured three officers and 30 men. In all there were five machine-guns mounted round the dug-out, and by putting these out of action McBeath cleared the way for the advance of both units. His valour was shown not merely on one occasion but during three days of severe fighting, and his conduct throughout was officially described as being beyond praise.

Very resourceful and courageous also was the behaviour in a time of grave peril of Sergeant John McAulay, D.C.M., Scots Guards



**SEC.-LIEUT. (Acting CAPTAIN) A. M. LASCELLES,**  
Durham Light Infantry.

(Stirling). His was one of the cases of a self-reliant non-commissioned officer taking command of a company when all the officers had become casualties, reorganizing the men and cheering them; showing also high spirit and skill in using machine-guns. In addition to these displays of heroism, the sergeant carried to a place of safety, under heavy fire, and for a



LCE.-CORPORAL R. McBEATH,  
Seaforth Highlanders.

long distance, his company commander, who had been mortally wounded. That was an uncommonly hard and terrible journey, for twice the sergeant was knocked down by the concussion of bursting shells, and determined efforts were made by the enemy to intercept him. Two of these assailants he killed, and triumphing over all obstacles and dangers, he succeeded in the noble purpose to which he had steeled himself. McAulay was a member of the Glasgow Police Force. In March, 1918, he was presented with a silver cigar and cigarette casket and a silver cigarette case by Major Lord Stair, on behalf of his comrades of the Sergeants' Mess of the Scots Guards, Wellington Barracks.

One case remains to complete this long and varied list—that of Major (Acting Lieut.-Col.) John Sherwood-Kelly, C.M.G., D.S.O., Norfolk Regiment, commanding a battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. In this, as in so many other records, the details were unnecessarily obscure—"the canal," "the bridge" and "the high ground" being mentioned, though not the slightest intelligible clue had been afforded as to any particular canal, or bridge, or ground; while it could only be assumed that the "enemy," persistently referred to as such,

were Germans. No official dulness or vagueness, however, could prevent the formation of a very clear impression of the excellence of the colonel's leadership or his consistent bravery. A party of men of another unit which had been detailed to cover the passage of "the canal" by his battalion were held up on the near side of the water by heavy rifle fire directed on "the bridge." The officer at once ordered covering fire and personally led the leading company of his battalion across the canal. After crossing he reconnoitred, under heavy fire from rifles and machine-guns, "the high ground" held by the enemy. When the left flank of the colonel's battalion advanced to the assault of this objective it was held up by a thick belt of wire, whereupon he crossed to that flank, and with a Lewis gun team, forced his way "under heavy fire through obstacles, got the gun into position on the far side, and covered the advance of his battalion through the wire." In this way Colonel Sherwood-Kelly and his men were enabled to capture the



[Bassano.]

SERGEANT JOHN McAULAY,  
Scots Guards.

position. Subsequently this gallant officer personally led a charge against "some pits" from which a heavy fire was being directed on his men. The resolute nature of this assault was sufficiently shown by the result, for the pits were captured, together with five machine-guns and 46 prisoners, a large number of the enemy being killed.

No fewer than seven posthumous awards





LIEUT.-COLONEL SHERWOOD-KELLY, C.M.G., D.S.O.,  
Shows his Cross to some friends.

were included in a total of 12 announcements in the *London Gazette* of February 13, 1918. One of the awards was of exceptional interest because of the nature of the deed for which it was given and the fact that the recipient died while a prisoner of war in Germany; it was still further notable because of his rank and youth. This hero was Lieut.-Colonel Neville Bowes Elliott-Cooper, D.S.O., M.C., Royal Fusiliers, who was only 29 years of age. Colonel Elliott-Cooper heard that the enemy had broken through our outpost line, whereupon he rushed from his dug-out, and on seeing them advancing across the open he mounted the parapet and dashed forward, calling upon the reserve company and details of battalion headquarters to follow. This conduct in itself was truly spirited, but to add to its distinction the colonel was absolutely unarmed, and therefore had not that moral support which the possession of weapons undoubtedly gives to a fighter. Undeterred by this circumstance, and equally undismayed by the advancing enemy, he made straight for them and he and his gallant band forced them back 600 yards. The colonel was in front and while

still 40 yards ahead he was severely wounded. He saw that his men were greatly outnumbered and suffered heavily—then he crowned his noble courage by a glorious sacrifice, for though he knew that he must suffer the worst of all a good soldier's fate—that of being taken prisoner by the Germans—he signalled to his



[Speaight.]

LIEUT.-COLONEL N. B. ELLIOTT-COOPER,  
Royal Fusiliers.



Temp. LIEUT. (Acting CAPTAIN)  
R. W. L. WAIN,  
Tank Corps.

men to withdraw. It was through Colonel Elliott-Cooper's prompt and gallant leading that time was gained for the reserves to move up and occupy the line of defence. Subsequently it was reported that he died of wounds on February 11 while a prisoner of war at Hanover.

The stories of the other six posthumous honours showed how worthy the recipients were to keep company with an officer like Elliott-Cooper. Of these half-dozen all but one were officers, the exception being Private Walter Mills, Manchester Regiment (Oldham), whose act was uncommonly brave and self-sacrificing. Following an intense gas attack, a strong enemy patrol tried to rush our posts, the garrisons of which had been overcome. Mills was badly gassed himself, but in spite of this he met the attack single-handed and continued to throw bombs until reinforcements came, and he courageously remained at his post until the hostile attacks had been finally driven off. The determined devotion of this soldier is best judged from the fact that he died from gas poisoning while being carried away. It was solely due to his exertions, "when his only chance of personal safety lay in remaining motionless," that the enemy was defeated and the line remained intact.

"Fighting to the last, till he was shot

through the head," was written of another Royal Fusilier officer, Lieutenant (Acting Captain) Walter Napleton Stone, whose valour was shown in a desperate rearguard action—an episode which brought into strong relief some of the incidents which were of daily occurrence in the war and of necessity passed almost without public notice. Stone was commanding a company in an isolated position 1,000 yards in front of the main line and overlooking the enemy's position. He saw the enemy massing for an attack and afforded invaluable information to brigade headquarters. The captain was ordered to withdraw his company, leaving a rearguard to cover the withdrawal. The attack developing with unexpected speed, he sent three platoons back and himself remained with the rearguard. What followed proved the heroism of the captain and his little band. There was "a tremendous bombardment," and under this the officer stood on the parapet with a telephone observing the enemy and continuing to send back valuable information until by his orders the wire was cut. Stone's coolness and accurate information, however, had enabled dispositions to be made just in time to save the line and avert disaster. Part



PRIVATE WALTER MILLS,  
Manchester Regiment.

of the cost of that important gain was the captain's life, and with him perished his valiant rearguard, which was "eventually surrounded and cut to pieces."

A fatal wound in the head ended the display of a tank commander's bravery. This was Temporary Lieutenant (Acting Captain) Richard William Leslie Wain, Tank Corps, whose tank was disabled by a direct hit during



an attack. The only survivors were Wain and one man and both were seriously wounded. The captain was bleeding profusely from his wounds, but he refused the attention of the stretcher bearers, and, rushing from behind the tank with a Lewis gun, he captured an enemy strong point which was holding up the attack, taking about half the garrison prisoner. Although the officer's wounds were very serious, he picked up a rifle and went on firing at the retreating enemy until he received a wound in the head which proved fatal. Wain's valour and self-sacrifice enabled the infantry to advance.

The superb contempt of danger which had been for so long associated with Guardsmen's deeds was shown to the full by Lieutenant (Acting Captain) George Henry Tatham Paton, M.C., Grenadier Guards. A unit on his left had been driven back and his company practically surrounded, whereupon Paton fearlessly exposed himself to readjust the line. Within 50 yards of the enemy, and under a withering fire, he coolly walked up and down, setting an inspiring example to his men. He personally



LIEUT. (Acting CAPTAIN) G. H. T. PATON,  
Grenadier Guards.

removed several men and was the last to leave the village where this brave display was made. At a later stage Paton again readjusted the line. During the whole of the operation he exposed himself regardless of all danger, and



LIEUT. (Acting CAPTAIN) W. NAPLETON  
STONE,  
Royal Fusiliers.

when the enemy four times counter-attacked he sprang each time on the parapet. This deliberate risking of his life brought an almost inevitable end, and the young Guardsman was at last mortally wounded. After the enemy had broken through on his left he again mounted the parapet and with a few men "who were inspired by his great example" forced them once more to withdraw, thereby undoubtedly saving the left flank.

Lieutenant Hugh Mackenzie, D.C.M., Canadian Machine-Gun Corps; Second Lieutenant Stanley Henry Parry Boughey, Royal Scottish Fusiliers, and Temporary Second Lieutenant James Samuel Emerson, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, were three more posthumous cases. Mackenzie showed splendid leadership when in charge of a section of four machine-guns accompanying the infantry in an attack. Seeing that the remnants of an infantry company were hesitating before a nest of machine-guns which were on commanding ground and causing severe casualties, he rallied the infantry, organized an attack and carried the strong point. Then he found that the position was swept by machine-gun fire from a "pill-box" which dominated all the ground over which the troops were advancing, and he organized and led an assault which ended in the capture of the "pill-box,"



LIEUT. HUGH MACKENZIE,  
Canadian Machine Gun Corps.

but cost his own life, for he was killed while leading the frontal attack.

Boughey's exploit was conspicuously courageous. Large numbers of the enemy had managed to crawl up within 30 yards of our firing line and with bombs and automatic rifles were keeping down our machine-gun fire, whereupon Boughey, alone, rushed forward with bombs right up to the enemy, doing great execution and causing the surrender of a party of thirty. At the moment the enemy were surrendering and as Boughey turned to go back for more bombs he was mortally wounded.

Emerson's Cross was awarded for repeated acts of valour, his heroism being shown even when "worn out and exhausted from loss of blood." He led his company in attack and cleared 400 yards of trench. He was wounded, but when the enemy attacked in superior numbers he sprang out of the trench with eight men and so successfully met the attack in the open that he killed many of his opponents and took six prisoners. After this, for three hours, all other officers having become casualties, he remained with his company, refusing to go to the dressing station, and repeatedly repelled bombing attacks. Later, when the enemy again attacked in superior numbers, Emerson led his men to repel the attack and was mortally wounded. Even then, when he was almost surrounded, he inspired his men

to hold out till reinforcements came and dislodged the enemy.

Of the five surviving recipients two belonged to the Royal Field Artillery—Temp. Lieutenant Samuel T. Dickson Wallace and Sergeant Cyril Edward Gourley, M.M. Lieutenant Wallace's case had an uncommon element in that it was recorded of him that he was heavily punished by the fire of aeroplanes as well as that of artillery, machine-guns and infantry, this being an exceptional reference in the stories of Victoria Cross awards. The *personnel* of the battery had been reduced to five, it had lost its commander and five of the sergeants, and was surrounded by enemy infantry on the front right flank and finally in rear. The odds against Wallace were so heavy as to seem almost hopeless, yet he showed in that extremity the courage and resource which had so often proved the salvation of the British fighter. He maintained the fire of the guns by swinging the trails round close together, the men running and loading from gun to gun. In this way the lieutenant not only covered other battery positions but also materially helped some small battery detachments to hold a position against great odds. Wallace was in action for eight hours. During the whole of that time he was firing and inflicting serious losses on the enemy; and it was not until he was forced to do so by the exhausted state of his *personnel* and infantry support



Temp. SEC.-LIEUT. J. S. EMERSON,  
Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.





## CAPTAIN PATON SAVES HIS POSITION.

arrived that he withdrew. How coolly he acted and how triumphantly was shown by the fact that even then, at the end of that long successful stand, this undaunted fighter took with him the "essential gun parts and all unwounded men." Something like poetic justice was done by the addition to the official record of the welcome sentence: "His guns were eventually recovered."

Gourley's bravery had already won for him the Military Medal: the Cross was awarded to him for his valour when commanding a section of howitzers. The sergeant afforded an example of the extraordinary and almost inconceivable tenacity with which the British soldier fought against hopeless odds. The enemy had advanced in force and had got within 400 yards in front and between 300 and





SAVING THE GUNS.



400 yards to one flank and had snipers in rear, yet Gourley managed to keep one gun in action practically throughout the day. Frequently driven off, he always returned, carrying ammunition, laying and firing the gun himself, taking first one and then another of the detachment to help him. When the enemy advanced he pulled his gun out of the pit and engaged a machine-gun at 500 yards, knocking it out with a direct hit. For the whole of that harassing and perilous day the sergeant held the enemy in check, firing with open sights on enemy parties in full view at 300 to 800 yards, "and thereby saved his guns, which

under severe fire, to obtain, not the help of other riflemen, but one of those useful monsters, a tank. With this powerful reinforcement Shepherd returned to his company, and finally led them to their last objective.

Private (Lance-Corporal) John Thomas, North Staffordshire Regiment (E. Manchester), who was in this list, received the Cross for great personal bravery and for securing information of the utmost value.

The London Regiment, which had so often in the fiercest fighting upheld the noblest traditions of the Army, gave two more members to the roll of the Cross, these being Corporal Charles



SERGEANT C. E. GOURLEY, R.F.A.

were withdrawn at nightfall." It was a fine climax to a fine achievement, and in keeping with the gallant conduct of Lieutenant Wallace, whose guns also were not to be a trophy for the enemy.

Rifleman Albert Edward Shepherd, King's Royal Rifle Corps (Barnsley), was awarded the Cross for his conduct as a company runner when, his company being held up by machine-gun fire at point-blank range, he volunteered to rush the weapon. Here was another instance of a man being ordered not to do a thing and disobeying, and of disobedience being looked upon with tolerance and admiration. "Though ordered not to," Shepherd rushed forward and threw a Mills bomb, killing two gunners and capturing the gun. His company held on in its advance, and coming under heavy enfilade machine-gun fire, suffered so heavily that all the officers and non-commissioned officers became casualties. Then the rifleman took command of the company, ordering the men to lie down while he went back some 70 yards,



Temp. LIEUT. S. T. D. WALLACE, R.F.A.

William Train, of Finsbury Park, and Rifleman (Lance-Corporal) John Alexander Christie, of Upper Holloway. Their records were gazetted on February 27, with the announcement of the award of the honour to Private James Duffy, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (Letterkenny). In the early months of 1915 Second Lieutenant Woolley and Lance-Sergeant Belcher and Lance-Corporal Keyworth had proved their valour as Territorials, and had been the first members of the London Regiment to win the Cross, Keyworth particularly distinguishing himself as a bomber of the Germans; and that exploit had fit companionship in Train's deeds. Train had the experience, so common to the British fighter, who never hesitated to hurl himself against great odds, of finding his company unexpectedly engaged at close range by a party of the enemy with two machine-guns and brought to a standstill. Without waiting for any orders, but acting on his own initiative, Train rushed forward and engaged the enemy with rifle grenades. It was a close, fierce fight,



LANCE-CORP. JOHN THOMAS,  
North Staffordshire Regiment.



CORP. C. W. TRAIN,  
London Regiment.



RIFLEMAN A. E. SHEPHERD,  
King's Royal Rifles.

but the corporal was fully equal to the odds that he had so boldly taken, and by his skill and resolution put some of the team out of action with a fine direct hit. Then he performed one of the truly astonishing acts that are inseparably and peculiarly connected with the Cross—he shot at and wounded the officer in command and with bomb and rifle killed or wounded the rest of the team. Having so completely and victoriously accounted for one of the machine-guns and its team, Train went to help a comrade who was “bombing the enemy from their front,” and shot at and killed one of them who was carrying the gun out of action. These deeds saved Train’s battalion heavy casualties and greatly helped at a very critical period. Christie, the Rifleman, also distinguished himself in



LANCE-CORP. JOHN A. CHRISTIE,  
London Regiment.

bombing work, and by his prompt and gallant action cleared a difficult position at a most critical time and saved many lives, his danger being made the greater by continuous heavy machine-gun and shell fire. A position had been captured and the enemy had immediately made counter and bombing attacks up communication-trenches. Understanding the position and realizing its possibilities, Christie took a supply of bombs over the top, proceeding alone about 50 yards in the open along the communication-trench; then he bombed the enemy and continued to do this alone, in spite of very heavy opposition, until a block had been established. When he returned towards our lines he heard voices behind him, whereupon he instantly turned back and bombed another party of the enemy who were moving up the trench—a renewed display of courage and resource which entirely broke up a further bombing attack. These two members of the London Regiment once again showed the extraordinary capacity of the individual British fighter, his quickness to see a chance to strike, his swiftness to seize it, and his unrivalled skill when working with the bomb or rifle. Private Duffy, who kept the two Riflemen company in the *Gazette* announcement, won his Cross for the bravery he showed as a stretcher-bearer when his company was holding a much exposed position. He disregarded heavy fire and showed an utter contempt of danger; he ran extreme risks in the open, and he showed consistent self-sacrifice and devotion to duty which resulted in the undoubted saving of two men’s lives. He rescued them under heavy fire and, having taken them to cover, attended to their injuries.

The Englishman’s love of sport accounted for many of the brilliant achievements of which details were published, and doubtless





**Temp. LIEUT. (Acting CAPTAIN) A. M. C. McREADY-DIARMID,**  
**Middlesex Regiment.**

early training in the cricket field enabled officers and men to perform those wonderful bombing feats of which so many were officially recorded. High courage and great skill were shown by British bombers to whom the Cross was awarded, and at times it seemed that the ability to perform remarkable feats was due not so much to training as to a natural gift. Such ability was undoubtedly possessed by Temp. Lieutenant (Acting Captain) Allastair Malcolm Chumy McReady-Diarmid, Middlesex Regiment, an officer who upheld in the most splendid manner the noble traditions of the "Die-hards." The posthumous award of this Cross was made known on March 16, 1918, and the details showed how daring and successful was the conduct of the recipient, of whom it was said that "it was absolutely and entirely due to his marvellous throwing of bombs" that certain things were done. There had not been any such definite praise for even some of the previous bombers, fine though their deeds were. The captain (who was formerly known as Arthur Malcolm McReady Drew) at once led his company forward through a heavy barrage when the enemy had penetrated some distance into our position and the situation was extremely critical. Immediately engaging the enemy, he was so successful that he drove them back at least 300 yards, and in addition to causing numerous casualties he took 27 prisoners. Singularly

enough, he partially repeated this performance next day, when the enemy drove back another company which had lost all its officers. McReady-Diarmid at once called for volunteers, and attacked so resolutely that he again drove the enemy back 300 yards, with heavy enemy losses, this brave exploit regaining the ground. There was, perhaps, something appropriate in the circumstance that this outstanding bomber was himself eventually killed by a bomb, but that was not until the enemy had been driven right back to their original starting-point. Again it had to be recorded of a British officer that his absolute disregard of danger and his cheerfulness and coolness at a most trying time inspired all who saw him. Though no official indication was given as to the nationality of the "enemy" or the scene of the officer's achievements, it was reported in the Press that his valour was shown at Cambrai and that in one day he killed 80 Germans.

In all the announcements of the Cross there had not been one which caused a greater thrill of emotion or aroused more pride and confidence, than the award on March 30, 1918 (*Gazette* of April 2), to Second Lieutenant (Temp. Captain) James Byford McCudden,



**PRIVATE JAS. DUFFY,**  
**Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.**

Royal Flying Corps. There had been many instances of treble honours borne by Victoria Cross recipients, but there had not been a case which afforded a parallel to that of McCudden, for he held the Military Medal, the Military Cross with a bar, and the Distinguished Service Order with a bar, so that at the time of the conferring of the Cross he actually possessed five honours which had been won

in action, and all of them for achievements as an airman. This record in itself was amazing, and it was made more so by reason of the captain's youth, for he was only 22 years old. Youth, however, was a distinguishing feature of the most famous of the heroes of the Flying Corps to whom the Cross had been awarded, the brilliant and intrepid Ball being only 20 years of age when he met his fate. The War Office statement was that McCudden's Cross had been awarded for "conspicuous bravery, exceptional perseverance, keenness and very high devotion to duty on various occasions during December, 1917, and January of the present year." The Military Medal was awarded to him when he was a flight sergeant in the Royal Flying Corps for his consistent courage and dash during September, 1916, in attacking and destroying an enemy machine and forcing two others to land. Twice also he crossed the enemy's lines at a very low altitude in attacking hostile balloons under very heavy fire. McCudden—he was the son of a warrant officer of the Royal Engineers and was born in barracks at Chatham—had joined the Royal Engineers as a boy, and when war broke out he was transferred to the Royal Flying Corps and went to the front as a mechanic. He had risen to the rank of flight sergeant when he showed the gallantry and energy which won for him the Military Medal. In 1916 he took his pilot's certificate, and obtained his commission in the following year. It was on February 15, 1917, that he showed the dash and daring which were rewarded with the Military Cross. On that day he followed a hostile machine down to a height of 300 feet and drove it to the ground. The bar to the Military Cross followed for his splendid work during the period of August 15–September 28, 1917, when McCudden took part in many offensive patrols. He led more than 30 of these and destroyed five enemy machines and drove three others down out of control. The Distinguished Service Order was bestowed on him for his conduct on November 29–30, 1917, when he attacked and brought down an enemy two-seater within our lines, both occupants being taken prisoner. This was not all—Captain McCudden also encountered an enemy machine during very bad weather conditions at 2,000 feet and fought it down to a height of 100 feet, when it was destroyed. This in itself was worthy of the finest traditions of the air service; but the captain was not satisfied—

he "came down to within a few feet of the ground in the enemy's lines, and finally crossed the line at a very low altitude." The record pointed out that subsequent to the award of the bar to the Military Cross McCudden had been responsible for the destruction of seven enemy machines, two of which fell within our lines. The bar to the D.S.O. was awarded for the captain's skill and gallantry on November 23, 1917, when by his fearlessness and clever manœuvring he destroyed four enemy machines, three of which fell within our lines: he also drove his patrol against six enemy machines, driving them off.

It was said that McCudden, at the time of the award of his greatest honour, had brought down more enemy machines than any other Allied airman, living or dead. The captain's squadron received the news of the award from the King himself during his visit to the front while the great battle was in progress. The details published showed that McCudden had accounted for no fewer than 54 enemy aeroplanes. Forty-two of these had been "definitely destroyed," 19 of them on our side of the lines, only 12 of the 54 having been driven out of control. On two occasions the captain totally destroyed four two-seater enemy aeroplanes on the same day, on the last occasion all four machines being destroyed in an hour and a half. It was added that while in his present squadron McCudden had participated in 78 offensive patrols, and in nearly every case had been the leader. On at least 30 other occasions, whilst with the same squadron, he had crossed the lines alone, either in pursuit or in quest of enemy aeroplanes. The following incidents were given as examples of McCudden's recent work:—

On December 23, 1917, when leading his patrol, eight enemy aeroplanes were attacked between 2.30 p.m. and 3.50 p.m. Of these two were shot down by Captain McCudden in our lines. On the morning of the same day he left the ground at 10.50 and encountered four enemy aeroplanes. Of these he shot two down.

On January 30, 1918, he single-handedly attacked five enemy scouts, as a result of which two were destroyed. On this occasion he only returned home when the enemy scouts had been driven far east; his Lewis gun ammunition was all finished and the belt of his Vickers gun had broken.

As a patrol leader he has at all times shown the utmost gallantry and skill, not only in the manner in which he has attacked and destroyed the enemy, but in the way he has during several aerial fights protected the newer members of his flight, thus keeping down their casualties to a minimum.

This officer is considered, by the record which he has made, by his fearlessness, and by the great service which he has rendered to his country, deserving of the very highest honour.



There was universal regret when it became known that McCudden had been accidentally killed in France. His exceptional abilities had been exercised at home for training purposes, and McCudden, who had been promoted major, was returning from Scotland in his favourite single-seater. He was about to take up a new command, and on his way he made a business call at an aerodrome. This was on Monday, July 8, 1918. The major had just risen again, with the object of completing his journey, when his machine crashed from a low altitude and he was instantaneously killed. The cause of the accident was not known. His fate was strikingly reminiscent of that of Warneford, on June 17, 1915, at Buc Aerodrome, Paris.\*

Simultaneously with the publication of details of McCudden's deeds in *The Times* there was given a message from Lord Rothermere, Secretary of State for the Royal Air Force, to the aerodrome workers of the United Kingdom, in which he said :—

"Our splendid airmen during the present battle have accounted for 339 of the enemy's aeroplanes, and have killed very many of the enemy by bombs and by machine-gun fire. They are working night and day for their country. On their behalf I ask you to do everything you can to hasten construction work. . . . Aerodrome construction work is just as necessary as the work of the airman. Without your help he can do nothing, and without his matchless courage and endurance it will be impossible for the armies in the field to withstand the constantly increasing pressure of the foe."

A notable event at this period was the death of Baron von Richthofen, the most famous of German airmen. He was brought down in the Somme Valley behind our lines, and was buried in a village in the neighbourhood where he fell. He was credited in the German official reports with having brought down 80 machines. In recording the occurrence the Special Correspondent of *The Times* said :— "While probably not as brilliant as Captain Ball, all our airmen concede that Richthofen was a great pilot and a fine fighting man." Not long after the German airman's death there was published *The Red Air Fighter*, an English translation of his war autobiography. Referring to this work, in a most interesting letter published in *The Times Literary Supplement*

ment, "One of Richthofen's Opponents" said that it "contains a tissue of mis-statements and lies which it is necessary to expose," and this he proceeded to do.

Almost simultaneously with the announcement of the honours of McCudden, the statement



SEC.-LIEUT. (Temp. CAPTAIN) J. B.  
McCUDDEN,  
Royal Flying Corps.

was published of the death on the first day of the great German offensive of one of the best known of the earlier recipients of the Cross. This was Lieutenant-Colonel John Henry Stephen Dimmer, to whom, as a lieutenant of the 2nd Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps, the Cross had been awarded for bravery on November 12, 1914. Though shot five times, three times by shrapnel and twice by bullets, while serving his machine-gun during the attack at Klein Zillebeke, he continued at his post until his gun was destroyed. Dimmer received rapid promotion and at the time of his death in action on March 21, 1918, was attached as lieutenant-colonel to the Royal Berkshire Regiment. A few weeks previously he had married a Birmingham lady, the ceremony attracting much attention, for Dimmer had been consistently regarded by the public with admiration. This was specially shown at Wimbledon, his native place; but public applause and attention did not appeal

\* Vol. X. p. 30.

to him. So greatly did he dislike praise indeed, that when Wimbledon offered him the honorary freedom of the borough he declined it, saying that too much publicity had been given to his name already and had caused him a great deal of worry and annoyance. Dimmer's was the tenth Victoria Cross to be announced for the war, and a letter written by him describing the affair in which he was knocked out and wounded so severely showed



MRS. FLOWERDEW LEAVES THE PALACE  
WITH HER SON'S CROSS.

that the action was due to a sudden attack by Prussian Guards.

On the King's 53rd birthday, June 3, 1918, there fell in action that truly brave recipient of the Cross, Brigadier-General F. W. Lumsden.\* So recently as on the 23rd of the preceding April he had been awarded a third bar to his D.S.O. for conspicuous gallantry and disregard of danger during a large raid on the enemy's lines, and two days before his death he was awarded the C.B. A brother officer stated that Lumsden, on the night of June 3, was up in the front line trenches of his brigade when there was an alarm of an attack. Instantly the general, "in his usual

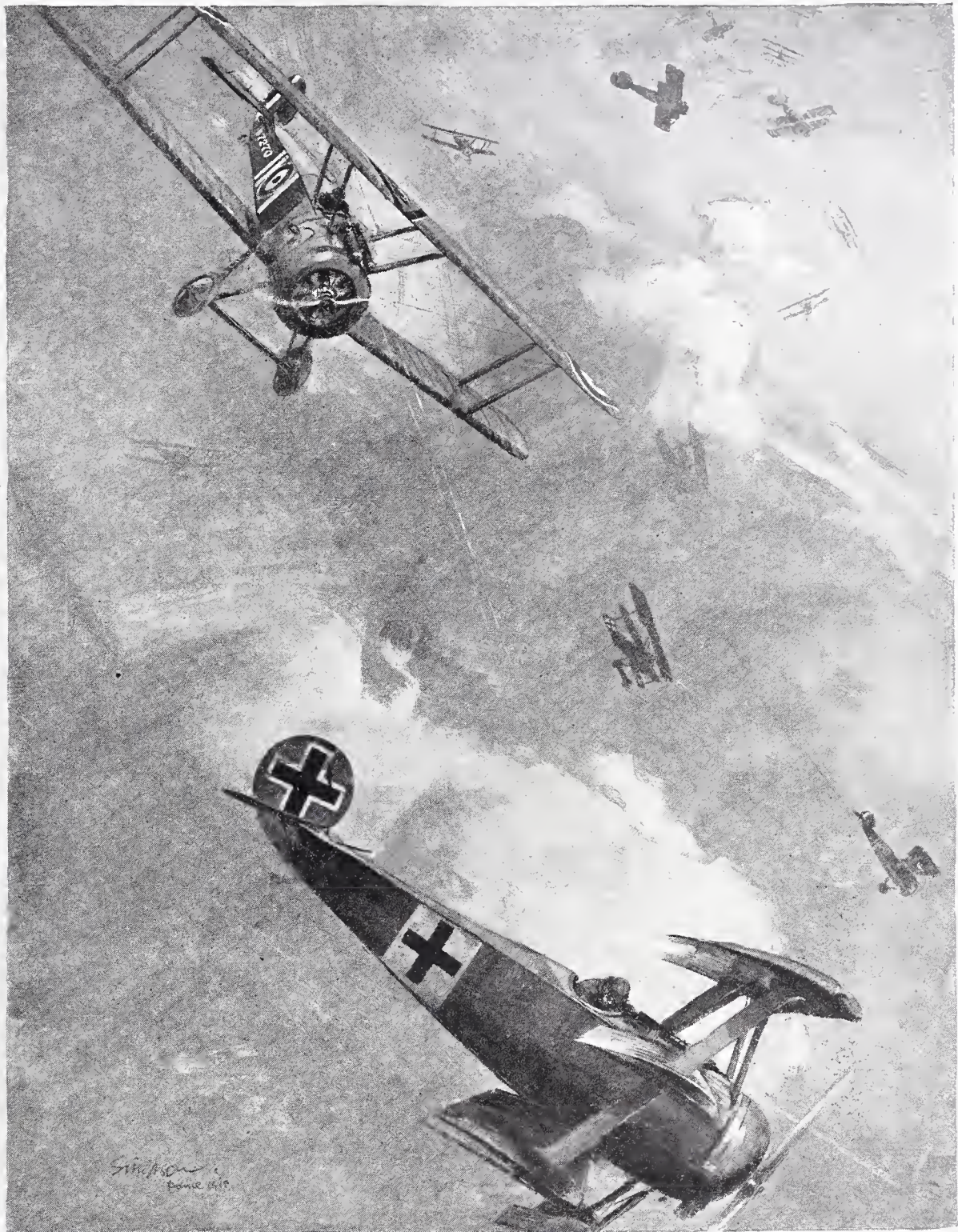
fearless manner," walked up to see for himself where the trouble was. He exposed himself without regard to his own safety, thinking only of that of his men, and in doing so he was instantly killed by a rifle bullet through the head. General Lumsden was mourned by the whole of his brigade. "All the honours he gained," said the brother officer, "during the last year even, in every case were won over and over again, as there was hardly a day when he did not expose himself to danger in a way which was an example to all."

One Cross was announced on April 9, 1918, for a very gallant machine-gunner—Lance-Corporal Charles Graham Robertson, M.M., Royal Fusiliers (Merstham). He was acting in desperate operations, and finding that he was being cut off he sent back two men to get reinforcements. With only one other man he remained at his post and killed large numbers of the enemy with his Lewis gun. No reinforcements came up, and Robertson, seeing that he was entirely cut off, withdrew with his surviving comrade to a point about 10 yards farther back, and this position he successfully held. Here again a brave defence was made and heavy losses caused to the enemy; but the two men were forced out of the position and they retired to a defended post. The corporal got on top of the parapet with his comrade, mounted his gun in a shell-hole, and continued firing on the enemy, who "were pouring across the top of and down an adjoining trench." His brave comrade was soon killed and he himself was severely wounded; but he managed to crawl back, bringing his gun with him, though, as he had used all his ammunition, he could no longer fire it.

The very rare case of a holder of the Victoria Cross being mentioned in connexion with operations for which another Cross was awarded was included in three announcements from the War Office on April 24, 1918. The recipients were officers, of whom two were killed. The particular instance was that of Lieutenant Gordon Muriel Flowerdew, Canadian Cavalry, whose exploit recalled the dash and daring of the Balaklava Charge. Flowerdew was in command of a squadron detailed for specially important service. Reaching his first objective, he saw two lines of the enemy, each about 60 strong, one line being about 200 yards behind the other. There were machine-guns in the centre and on the flanks.

\* Vol. XIII., p. 370.





#### BARON VON RICHTHOFEN'S END.

The operation was critical and much depended upon it; but there was available for the task a special officer in Lieutenant Harvey, V.C., and Flowerdew ordered him to dismount and carry out a "special movement," while he himself led the remaining three troops to the charge. Less one troop, the squadron passed over both lines, killing many of the enemy with the sword; and having done that they wheeled about and galloped at them again. The splendour and success of the charges were shown

by the fact that the squadron lost 70 per cent. of its numbers, killed and wounded, from rifle and machine-gun fire, and that in spite of this the enemy broke and retired. Then the survivors of the squadron established themselves in a position where Harvey's party joined them, after much hand-to-hand fighting. The gallant Flowerdew was dangerously wounded through both thighs during the operation—he subsequently died—but he continued to cheer on his men. Harvey had received his Cross for



bravery when his regiment—he also belonged to the Canadian Force—was attacking a village.\*

“Knowing that his men were extremely tired after six days’ fighting,” Captain (Acting Lieut.-Colonel) John Stanhope Collings-Wells, D.S.O., Bedfordshire Regiment, set them an example of undaunted courage which un-



**CAPTAIN (Acting LIEUT.-COL.) J. S. COLLINGS-WELLS,**  
Bedfordshire Regiment.

doubtedly brought success to very critical operations. He was conducting a withdrawal, and the rearguard was almost surrounded and in great danger of being captured, when Lieut.-Colonel Collings-Wells called for volunteers to remain behind and hold up the enemy whilst the rest of the rearguard withdrew. For an hour and a half, until they had expended every round of ammunition, the colonel held up the enemy, freely moving amongst his men and guiding and encouraging them so well that the situation was saved. It was after this affair, when his battalion was ordered to carry out a counter-attack, that the officer, although knowing of the state of his men after the six days’ fighting, placed himself in front and led the attack. Even when twice wounded he refused to leave his men, but led and encouraged them until at the moment of gaining the objective he was killed.

The remarkable official tribute that he “displayed almost superhuman powers of endurance” was paid to Lieutenant (Acting Captain) Reginald Frederick Johnson Hayward, M.C., Wiltshire Regiment. This officer was

commanding a company, and his example of ceaseless energy and refusal to succumb to physical ills were certainly most extraordinary. On the first day of the operations he was buried, wounded in the head, and rendered deaf, yet he refused to leave his men. Two days later he had his arm shattered, still he persisted in remaining with his gallant fellows, who were being incessantly attacked. Hayward continued to move across the open from one trench to another, utterly regardless of his own safety, and concerned only with reorganizing his defences and encouraging his men: and it was not until, having received a third serious injury, to his head, he collapsed from sheer physical exhaustion that he ended his display of courage and tenacity.

“Extremely tired after six days’ fighting.” That expression, published on April 25, made it reasonable to assume that in the case referred to the Cross had been awarded in connexion with



**LIEUT. (Acting CAPTAIN) R. F. J. HAYWARD,**  
Wiltshire Regiment.

the Great German offensive which was in full force, and it was known that, valiant as the British soldiers had been throughout the war, yet they had never been called upon to show such courage and endurance as that which was demanded of them when, enormously outnumbered, they were called upon to stand to the death—and were not called upon in vain. The reports from the special correspondents of *The Times* gave broad and general descrip-

\* Vol. XIII., p. 372. See also p. 285 of this volume.



tions which conveyed a clear impression of the performance of innumerable deeds for which it was inevitable that there should be a large award of Crosses; and almost simultaneously there was given to a grateful public the story of the glorious enterprise by the Navy on Zeebrugge and Ostend. There was a universal feeling that this development of the call upon our fighting men would inevitably result in a very large number of the highest awards, and the anticipation was fully realized. At the same time, it was quite generally taken for granted that no human care or foresight could give appropriate reward to every case of valour and devotion, and that at most the awards of even the Victoria Cross could but serve to signalize in special manner a few of numberless brave deeds.

"Air Ministry, May 1," for the first time took the place of the Admiralty and the War Office as the source of announcement of the award of Crosses, two being given to officers of the newly constituted Royal Air Force "for services displaying outstanding bravery." At that time the whole Empire was filled with pride in its airmen's doings, and of gratitude because it was so fully understood that the immortal Army, which was fighting with its back to the wall, owed much of its success to the Royal Air Force. The British had established an overwhelming superiority over the Germans in the air. *The Times* stated that the record for April brought up the total of German machines destroyed, captured or driven down out of control during the month to 287, and of British aeroplanes missing to 78. The description "Royal Air Force" now superseded the familiar initials "R.F.C." and "R.N.A.S.," with which the splendid air achievements of the war for three and three-quarter years had been associated. The two recipients of the Cross were Lieutenant Alan Jerrard, R.A.F. (formerly of the South Staffordshire Regiment), and Second Lieutenant Alan Arnett McLeod, R.A.F.

These two instances were of that astounding character which had become peculiarly associated with the reputation of British airmen, and were such as to be incredible if unsupported by the cold official testimony. Not only was deep admiration compelled for the spirit which forced the flyers into what seemed hopeless combat, but amazement was aroused because of men surviving such uncommon perils. Take the case of Jerrard, who, when

on an offensive patrol with two other officers, attacked five enemy aeroplanes and shot one down in flames. Not content with that he followed the burning machine down to within 100 feet of the ground. Then, from a height of only 50 feet, he attacked an enemy aerodrome and, "engaging single-handed some 19 machines," which were either landing or attempting to take off, destroyed one, which crashed on the aerodrome. Jerrard was then attacked by a large number of machines, and



LIEUT. ALAN JERRARD,  
Royal Air Force.

whilst thus "fully occupied" he saw that one of the pilots of his patrol was in difficulties, whereupon he instantly went to help him, regardless, in the true British way, of his own personal safety, and—here again came in the almost incredible element—destroyed a third enemy machine. The fight had now developed furiously, and this lieutenant of the Royal Air Force, who had greatly distinguished himself on four previous occasions, within 23 days, in destroying "enemy" (presumably German) machines, was menaced by fresh hostile aeroplanes, which continued to rise from the aerodrome. These he attacked one after another, and only retreated, "still engaged with five enemy machines," when ordered to do so by his patrol leader. There is no defeat for such intrepid spirits: there is no danger that can daunt them, and Lieutenant





LIEUT. McLEOD ON THE LOWER PLANE OF A BURNING MACHINE.

Alan Jerrard, of the Royal Air Force, although apparently wounded, turned repeatedly and, single-handed, attacked the pursuing machines, keeping up his amazingly courageous and resourceful fight till he was overwhelmed by numbers and driven to the ground.

That great deed kept company with the record of the story of the glorious fight of Lieutenant McLeod. He was flying with his observer (Lieutenant A. W. Hammond, M.C.), attacking hostile formations by bombs and machine-gun fire—one of many such attacks by British airmen—when he was assailed

by eight enemy triplanes. These powerful machines, at a height of 5,000 feet, “dived at him from all directions, firing from their front guns.” McLeod so skilfully manœuvred that he enabled his observer to fire bursts at each machine in turn, and so cool was his conduct, so stern his determination, that he shot three of his dangerous opponents down out of control. The fierceness of the combat and the danger into which the airman had cast himself were shown by the fact that he had received five wounds—and whilst remorselessly pursuing his advantage a bullet penetrated his



petrol tank and set the machine on fire. Then arose one of those astounding situations which previously had had no place outside the region of wild fancy. Far above the earth, in a blazing machine, himself suffering from no fewer than five wounds, McLeod set steadily to work not merely to save himself, his observer and his machine, but also to keep the immense advantage which he had already so valiantly gained over his enemy. He climbed out on to the left bottom plane, he controlled his machine from the side of the fuselage, he side-slipped steeply, and by doing so kept the flames to one side, and he enabled his observer to continue firing until the ground was reached. When the machine crashed in "No Man's Land" the observer kept the pilot gallant company, for he had been wounded no fewer than six times. So perilous had been this enterprise, so severely had both officers and machine been mauled and hurt by the enemy, that it did not seem possible for further trouble to befall them, yet there was to be a climax, and it came when McLeod, notwithstanding his own wounds, dragged Hammond away from the burning wreckage at great personal risk from heavy machine-gun fire. Even while engaged in this act of rescue "this very gallant pilot" was again wounded, by a bomb; but he persevered until he had placed Hammond in comparative safety. Then exhaustion and loss of blood compelled even the indomitable McLeod to fall.\*

The assumption was warranted that the announcements of Crosses which were made at this time were in connexion with the great German offensive, though there was no indication of this fact in the published details. Crosses were announced in batches, at short intervals, five being gazetted on May 3 and six on May 8. It was noteworthy that the eleven recipients included no fewer than four lieutenant-colonels, and that two of these officers lost their lives in performing the acts which won for them the soldier's greatest honour.

Of the May 3 awards three were posthumous: Temp. Major (Acting Lieut.-Colonel) Wm. Herbert Anderson, Highland Light Infantry; Second Lieutenant Bernard Matthew Cassidy, Lancashire Fusiliers, and Private Herbert George Columbine, Machine-Gun Corps (Walton-on-the-Naze). Colonel Anderson was awarded the Cross for his fearless leading in one of the

charges of which at this period there were so many, and for the inspiring example he set when such a lead was of incalculable value. The enemy had attacked on the right of his battalion frontage, and penetrated the wood held by our men. Successive lines of the enemy followed on closely, and there was the gravest danger that the flank of the whole position would be turned. The seriousness of the position was grasped by Colonel Anderson, who showed his cool courage by crossing the open in full view of the enemy, who were now holding the wood on the right, and after much



(H. W. Barnett.)

**Temp. MAJOR (Acting LIEUT.-COLONEL)  
W. H. ANDERSON,  
Highland Light Infantry.**

effort he succeeded in gathering the rest of the two right companies. The colonel personally led the counter-attack and drove the enemy from the wood, capturing 12 machine-guns and 70 prisoners and restoring the original line. This brilliant achievement was, later in the day, followed by another display of valour by the colonel. In another position the enemy had penetrated to within 300 yards of a village, and were holding a timber yard in force. Colonel Anderson's men had been driven in, but he reorganized them and brought them forward to a position of readiness for a counter-attack. This counter-attack, which he personally led, drove the enemy from his position; but the triumph was gained at

\* See also p. 287 of this volume.



SEC.-LIEUT. B. M. CASSIDY,  
Lancashire Fusiliers.

the cost of the life of Colonel Anderson, who died fighting within the enemy's lines.

The details of Cassidy's "exceptional devotion" called to mind the terribly significant order which had been issued by Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig—that there was to be no retirement, and that the British Army was to hold on to the last. A hostile attack was being made and the flank of a division was in danger. Cassidy was in command of the left company of his battalion, which was in support. "He was given orders prior to the attack that he must hold on to his position to the last. He most nobly carried this out to the letter." In overwhelming numbers the enemy came on and tried to turn the flank; but Cassidy, in spite of a terrific bombardment, continually rallied his men, and as the result of his personal leadership the enemy were several times cleared out of a trench. The lieutenant's company was eventually surrounded, but still the undaunted subaltern fought on, exhorting his men until at last he was killed. Cassidy had made his last stand, but his heroism held up the whole attack at this point and undoubtedly saved the left flank from what might have been a disaster. This episode of sheer valour and stern obedience to the very letter of a stern order was known to be but one of many such episodes at this particular period. The special correspondents of *The Times* had sent details while the great German offensive was in progress which clearly showed how gloriously the British Army had stood the overwhelming test to which the Field-Marshal Commanding in Chief had been

compelled to put it; and those correspondents made it plain that however lavishly honours were bestowed for valour and endurance they could not possibly cover more than a small proportion of the courageous and resourceful acts of British fighters of every grade and rank.

Columbine's case was highly dramatic. Owing to casualties he took over command of a gun. This was in an isolated position, with no wire in front, yet from 9 a.m. till 1 p.m. the private kept the weapon firing, and so steadily and effectively that wave after wave of the enemy failed to get up to him. There came into this case that rare element, for Victoria Cross deeds, which has been mentioned in the story of Lieutenant Wallace—an aeroplane. This, a low flying machine, attacked Columbine and at last the enemy secured a strong footing in the trench on either side. Finding that the position was untenable Columbine ordered the two remaining men to get away. He was bombed from both sides, yet he kept his gun firing, and inflicted "tremendous losses." This indomitable stand against enormous odds Columbine maintained until he was killed by a bomb "which blew up him and his gun." This devoted soldier's particularly gallant services decided the Walton-on-the-Naze Urban



PRIVATE H. G. COLUMBINE,  
Machine Gun Corps.

Council to raise by public subscription a memorial to Columbine. Provision was to be made for his widowed mother, whose husband was killed in the South African War.

Heavy direct losses to the enemy resulted from the prowess of Sergeant Stanley Robert McDougall, A.I.F., who saved the line and enabled a hostile advance to be stopped. The



sergeant, single-handed, charged the enemy's second wave with rifle and bayonet and killed seven and captured a machine-gun. Directing the weapon upon them, and firing from the hip, McDougall routed the wave and caused many casualties; then he turned his attention to the enemy who had entered the post, and at close quarters he fired until his ammunition ran out. He then seized a bayonet and charged again, killing three men and an officer who was just about to kill one of our own officers. By this time McDougall had killed with rifle and bayonet one officer and ten men, and using a Lewis gun on the enemy he killed many more and was the means of 33 prisoners being captured.

Inflexible resolution and magnificent courage marked the conduct, at a time of uncommon stress, of Captain (Temp. Lieut.-Colonel) Christopher Bushell, D.S.O., Royal West Surrey Regiment. The interesting revelation was made that Lieut.-Colonel Bushell's battalion was co-operating with an Allied regiment in a counter-attack. The colonel personally led "C" Company of his battalion, in face of very heavy machine-gun fire. During the attack he was severely wounded in the head, but he carried on, walking about in front of "both English and Allied troops," encouraging and reorganizing them. He showed that fine unselfish spirit to which reference has been often made in these stories of deeds which won the Cross—he refused even to have his wound attended to until he had placed the whole line in a sound position: and in doing that he undoubtedly won the admiration and strengthened the endurance of the Allied troops with whom he was fighting. Having been to the brigade headquarters and reported the situation and had his wound dressed the colonel returned to the line and visited every portion of it, both English and Allied, in the face of "terrific machine-gun and rifle fire, exhorting the troops to remain where they were, and to kill the enemy." In spite of his wounds this officer refused to go to the rear and at last he had to be removed, in a fainting condition, to the dressing-station. High and deserved praise was given to Lieut.-Colonel Bushell for his example of energy, devotion and courage, "not only on the day in question, but on each succeeding day of the withdrawal."

The list of May 8 was headed by Major (Acting Lieut.-Colonel) Oliver Cyril Spencer Watson, D.S.O. (Reserve of Officers), The King's

Own (Yorkshire Light Infantry). His was the simple story of a man rising and meeting a sudden and exceptionally dangerous emergency, of facing it coolly and resourcefully, and of showing the highest bravery when he knew that almost certain death would be his fate. Lieut.-Colonel Watson's command was at a point which had become particularly dangerous through continual enemy attacks, and an intricate system of old trenches in front of



CAPTAIN (Temp. LIEUT.-COLONEL) C. BUSHELL,  
Royal West Surrey Regiment.

a point which was under constant rifle and machine-gun fire. A counter-attack against the enemy position at first achieved its object, but as they were holding out in two improvised strong points the colonel saw that immediate action was necessary, and so he led his remaining small reserve to the attack. Outnumbered, he at last ordered his men to retire, and it was while remaining himself in a communication trench to cover the withdrawal that he was killed. It was officially recorded of him that both in the assault and in covering his men's retirement "he held his life as nothing." Watson was fit successor to the gallant Major Yate,\* 2nd Battalion The King's Own (Yorkshire Light Infantry), to whom the Cross was awarded for his bravery at Le Cateau on August 26, 1914, and who died as a prisoner of war, beloved and regretted by all who knew him.

The fourth of the lieutenant-colonels referred

\* Vol. X., p. 10.

to was Captain (Acting Lieut.-Colonel) Frank Crowther Roberts, D.S.O., M.C., Worcestershire Regiment, who, "during continuous operations which covered some twelve days," showed most conspicuous bravery, exceptional military skill in dealing with "the many very difficult situations of the retirement," and amazing endurance and energy. Once the



**CAPTAIN (Acting LIEUT.-COLONEL) F. C. ROBERTS,**  
Worcestershire Regiment.

enemy attacked a village and had practically cleared it of our troops when Roberts got together an improvised party and led a counter-attack which temporarily drove the enemy out of the village, so covering the retirement of troops on their flanks who would otherwise have been cut off.

For the first time during the war the Cross was won by a member of the Army Service Corps. This branch had done wonderful work, but the opportunities of distinguished service were few, and, indeed, only one Cross was previously associated with the Corps—that which Acting Assistant-Commissary Dalton won at Rorke's Drift in 1879. The later recipient was Private Richard George Masters, A.S.C. (Southport), who showed the utmost courage and initiative as a volunteer in very dangerous circumstances. Communications were cut off owing to an enemy attack, and wounded could not be evacuated. The road was reported impassable, but the private volunteered to try to get through. With the greatest difficulty he succeeded in his attempts, though he had to clear the road of all sorts of *débris*. The undertaking proved exceptionally

perilous, but throughout the afternoon Masters made journey after journey over a road that was consistently shelled and swept by shell and machine-gun fire; and to add to the thrill of the adventure Masters was on one occasion bombed by an aeroplane. His was the only car that could get through during this particular time, consequently the greater part of the wounded cleared from this area were evacuated by him.

For single-handed exploits the Cross was awarded to Sergeant Harold Jackson, East Yorkshire Regiment (Kirton, near Boston, Lincolnshire), and to Private Harold Whitfield, The King's (Shropshire Light Infantry) (Oswestry, Salop). Jackson volunteered and went out through a hostile barrage and brought back valuable information as to the enemy's



**MAJOR (Acting LIEUT.-COLONEL) O. C. S. WATSON,**  
King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

movements. Later, when the enemy had established themselves in our line, he rushed at them and, single-handed, bombed them out into the open. Soon afterwards, still working alone, this non-commissioned officer stalked an enemy machine-gun, threw Mills bombs at the detachment, and put the weapon out of action. Subsequently Jackson took successful charge of his company when all his officers had become casualties, and he put a splendid finish to his fine work by going out



repeatedly under heavy fire and carrying in wounded. Whitfield, too, showed total disregard of personal safety, and distinguished himself as a life-saver. Single-handed he charged and captured a Lewis gun which was harassing his company at short range, bayoneted



**PRIVATE R. G. MASTERS, A.S.C.**

or shot the whole team, then, turning the gun on the enemy, he drove them back with heavy casualties, and so restored the whole situation in his part of the line. At a later stage Whitfield organized and led a bombing attack which resulted in driving back the



**SERGEANT HAROLD JACKSON,  
East Yorkshire Regiment.**

enemy with great loss, and proved a most useful and valuable manœuvre.

"He was twice wounded within ten days, but remained at duty," was recorded of Second Lieutenant (Acting Captain) Alfred Maurice

Töye, M.C., Middlesex Regiment, who afforded another illustration of the terrible stress which was imposed upon British troops by the great German offensive. Reports from the front had shown how critical were many of the situations in which British troops found themselves during the retirement, and how nobly officers and men, often enough collected remnants, had responded to a supreme call upon their courage and devotion. Töye provided such an example. He fought desperately during a "prolonged period of intense operations." Amongst other achievements, finding 70 men of the battalion on his left retiring, he collected them and counter-attacked, taking up a line which he maintained until reinforcements arrived. Without this action the defence of a bridge on which the operations



**PRIVATE HAROLD WHITFIELD,  
King's Shropshire Light Infantry.**

centred must have been turned. All the captain's bravery and fine leadership were shown in extremely critical circumstances, and were perfectly in keeping with the daring and resourcefulness which had been so often shown during the war by the old "Die Hards" to which he belonged.

In a batch of seven Crosses which were announced from the War Office on May 22 there were contained stories of courage and endurance which had not been surpassed by any in connexion with the award of the distinction. In one case the definite statement could be made that the recipient was killed; in another it was recorded that a non-commissioned officer was in all probability killed at his gun; a third example was an officer of the Grenadier Guards of whom it was written that when last



SEC.-LIEUT. (Acting CAPTAIN) A. M.  
TOYE,  
Middlesex Regiment.

seen he was struggling fiercely, hand-to-hand, with overwhelming numbers of the enemy, and in a fourth instance it was said that when last seen a young officer was holding out against overwhelming odds. This young officer was Second-Lieutenant John Crawford Buchan,



SEC.-LIEUT. JOHN C. BUCHAN,  
Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

Buchan kept up his perilous task, although he had been accidentally injured; and it was not until he saw that the enemy had practically surrounded his command that he collected the survivors of his platoon and prepared to fight his way back to the supporting line. Now came the most dramatic moment of a most dramatic situation. The enemy had crept round the subaltern's right flank, and exulting in the belief that they had secured a batch of British prisoners they rushed forward with shouts of "Surrender!" Buchan met that hopeful order with the scornfully magnificent reply, "To hell with surrender!" and to show how earnest were his words and how resolute he was to die rather than yield he shot the foremost of the enemy. Such a noble lead was almost sure of the result which happily it brought about, for Buchan with his shattered but unconquered band at last repelled the hostile rush. Then he fought his way back to the supporting line of the forward position and there he held out till dusk. This heroic young subaltern of a famous Highland regiment might well have taken the rest which he had so justly earned, but though at dusk he fell back as ordered, he refused to go to the aid post, and ignoring his injuries insisted that his place was beside his men. Regrettable but glorious was the end of Buchan—it became impossible to send orders of withdrawal to him, as he was cut off, and when last seen he was making a hopeless fight. During two days of the most severe fighting he had, as was most truly recorded of him, maintained the highest traditions of the British Army.



CORPORAL JOHN T. DAVIES,  
South Lancashire Regiment.

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and the circumstances of his heroism were exceptionally inspiring. Buchan was fighting with his platoon in the forward position of the battle zone, and although he had been wounded early in the day he insisted on remaining with his men. Ignoring the most severe shell fire he continually visited all his posts, encouraging and cheering his men, who were suffering heavy casualties. The enemy crept closer and heavy machine-gun fire was raking the position, yet



A parallel case was that of Corporal John Thomas Davies, South Lancashire Regiment (St. Helen's), whose company, outflanked on both sides, was ordered to withdraw. There was the customary intense rifle and machine-gun fire. The corporal knew that the only line of withdrawal lay through a deep stream lined with a belt of barbed wire, and that it was



**SEC.-LIEUT. B. A. HORSFALL,**  
East Lancashire Regiment.

imperative to hold up the enemy as long as possible. He mounted the parapet and fully and fearlessly exposed himself, so that he might secure a more effective field of fire, and he kept his Lewis gun in action to the last, causing the enemy many casualties and checking their advance. This splendid devotion to duty enabled part of the company to get across the river, which they would have been unable to do otherwise, and so undoubtedly the lives of many of his comrades were saved. When last seen Davies was still firing his gun, "with the enemy close on top of him," and he was in all probability killed while keeping up this heroic defence.

To the renown which the Guards had won there was added the glory of the brave acts of Lieutenant (Acting Captain) Thomas Tannatt Pryce, Grenadier Guards, who had already won the Military Cross. At the time of the deeds for which the crowning honour was given to him he commanded a flank on the left of the Grenadiers, and time after time he showed that he possessed exceptional courage and

staying power. The captain had been ordered to attack a village and he personally led forward two platoons, working from house to house and killing 30 of the enemy, seven of whom he killed himself. Next day Pryce was occupying a position with 30 or 40 men, the rest of his company having become casualties; and as early as 8.15 a.m. his left flank was surrounded and the enemy was enfilading him. During the day the Guardsman was attacked no fewer than four times by the enemy and each time he beat them off, killing many. Determined to lose no chance of crushing such a stubborn foe the enemy brought up three field guns to within 300 yards of Pryce's line and were firing over open sights and knocking his trench in. The enemy so far succeeded that shortly after 6 o'clock in the evening they had worked up to within 60 yards of the trench;



[Bassano

**LIEUT. (Acting CAPTAIN) T. T. PRYCE**  
Grenadier Guards.

then the captain called upon his men to cheer and charge the enemy and fight to the last—and not only by word did he inspire them but by example also, for he led his men out of the trench and with the bayonet drove back the

enemy some 100 yards. So hopeless was the fight, however, that half-an-hour later the enemy had again come up in stronger force, and Pryce had only 17 men left and had fired every round of his ammunition. Still resolved that there should be no surrender, he once more led his handful of heroes forward in a bayonet charge, and it was now that he was seen for the last time, engaged in a fierce hand-to-hand struggle with overwhelming numbers of the enemy. For more than 10 hours this Guardsman with 40 men had held back at least one enemy battalion and had "undoubtedly stopped the advance through the British line, and thus had great influence on the battle."

(Blandford, Dorset), and Gunner Charles Edward Stone, M.M., R.F.A. (Sutton-in-Ashfield). Counter's courage was of the most extraordinary type, and it was not only of immense value in enabling him to fulfil his task, which involved almost certain death, but in greatly heartening his "young and untried companions." The enemy had gained a lodgment in the front line, from which it became necessary to obtain information. The only way was from the support line along a sunken road and thence down a forward slope for about 250 yards. There was no cover, and the way was in full view of the enemy, and was swept by their gun and rifle fire—indeed,



**PRIVATE J. T. COUNTER,**  
King's Liverpool Regiment.

"Killed when retiring to the positions in rear" was the fate of Second-Lieutenant Basil Arthur Horsfall, East Lancashire Regiment, who commanded the centre platoon during an attack on our positions. He was severely wounded in the head, but resolutely carried on and refused to go to the dressing-station. He gallantly counter-attacked and recovered positions from which he had been driven, and later, when his platoon had to be withdrawn to escape very heavy shell fire, he made a second counter-attack as soon as the shelling lifted and again recovered his positions. When the order to withdraw was given Horsfall was the last to leave his position, and, exhausted though he was, declared that he could have held on if it had been necessary.

Message-carrying in circumstances of the utmost danger marked the exploits for which Crosses were awarded to Private Jack Thomas Counter, The King's (Liverpool Regiment)



**GUNNER C. E. STONE,**  
Royal Field Artillery.

it was a death-trap. A small party had tried to get the information, but the leader had been killed and another man wounded before leaving the sunken road. This having happened, it was believed that one man would have a better chance of getting through, and the most desperate attempts were made—how desperate and how heroic was shown by the fact that five attempts were made, and each time the gallant runner was killed in full view of the position from which he had started. Private Counter had seen these brave fellows fall one after the other, he saw clearly how little hope there was of getting through or escaping with his life, yet with the utmost courage and determination he volunteered to carry the message. His offer was accepted, and he went out under terrific fire. Fortune favoured him, and he got through, and not only that, but he returned with vital information which enabled the whole of our position to be regained.





#### LIEUT.-COLONEL FORBES-ROBERTSON LEADING A COUNTER-ATTACK.

That remarkable display of valour did not end Counter's deeds, for subsequently he carried back five messages to company headquarters, crossing the open under a heavy artillery barrage.

Gunner Stone's fine record opened with six hours' hard work at his gun, under heavy gas and shell fire, then he was sent back to the rear section with an order which he safely

delivered, this act resembling the work of Private Counter. Then the gunner, under a very heavy barrage, voluntarily returned with a rifle to the forward position to help to hold up the enemy on a sunken road. Lying in the open, only about 100 yards from the enemy, and under very heavy machine-gun fire, he "calmly and effectively" shot the enemy until ordered to retire. Afterwards Stone continued



to distinguish himself by keeping the guns in action during critical periods, his behaviour throughout the whole day being magnificent. Regardless of machine-gun fire he rushed at and killed one of the enemy who had managed to break through, and he was one of a party which captured a machine-gun and four prisoners, who, in the dusk, had got round to the rear of the position—the party undoubtedly saving the detachment which served the guns.

This rousing list of seven was headed, as several of the later lists had been, by an acting lieutenant-colonel—Captain James Forbes-Robertson, D.S.O., M.C., Border Regiment, who won his Cross whilst commanding his battalion “during the heavy fighting.” Lieutenant-Colonel Forbes-Robertson’s quick judgment, resource, untiring energy and magnificent example saved the line from breaking on no fewer than four occasions, and averted a situation which might have had the most serious and far-reaching results. The circumstances of the colonel’s ease were uncommon, even amongst the many uncommon cases represented by the awards of the Cross. To begin with, on horseback, when troops in front were falling back, he made a rapid recon-



[Spaight.]

**CAPTAIN (Acting LIEUT.-COLONEL)  
JAMES FORBES-ROBERTSON,  
Border Regiment.**

wounded three times. Next day, the troops on both his flanks being forced to retire, he formed a post at battalion headquarters and with his battalion still held the ground, and so covered the retreat of troops on his flanks. The colonel, under the heaviest fire, continued to expose himself fearlessly when collecting parties, organizing and encouraging. Once more he saved a situation, and, losing a second horse, he continued alone on foot until he had established a line to which his own troops could withdraw and so conform to the general situation.

The only naval Cross awarded during the period under consideration was posthumous. It was announced by the Admiralty on May 17 for bravery and devotion to duty in the action in the Heligoland Bight on November 17, 1917—exactly six months previously. The award was to Ordinary Seaman John Henry Carless, and meagre though the details were they showed how magnificent was the spirit which animated this sailor hero. Carless was mortally wounded in the abdomen, but in spite of his terrible and hopeless state he went on serving the gun at which he was acting as rammer, lifting a projectile and helping to clear away the other casualties. Once he collapsed, but got up, tried again, and cheered on the new gun’s crew. “He then fell and died.”



**ORDINARY SEAMAN J. H. CARLESS.**

naissance, in full view of the enemy and under heavy machine-gun and close-range shell fire. Still mounted he organized and led a counter-attack which completely re-established our line. The colonel’s horse was shot under him, but he continued on foot. Later on the same day he checked and steadied a line which was giving way, his wonderful coolness and disregard of personal danger being shown by the fact that he was thrown five times and his horse was



The following is a list of the awards of the Victoria Cross from the beginning of 1918 to June 3, 1918, the King's 53rd birthday :—

ANDERSON, Temp. Major (Acting Lieut.-Colonel) Wm. Herbert, late Highland Light Infantry.

BARRON, Corpl. Colin, Canadian Infantry.

BENT, 2nd Lieut. (Temp. Lieut.-Colonel) Philip Eric, D.S.O., late Leicestershire Regt.

BOUGHEY, 2nd Lieut. Stanley Hy. Parry, late Royal Scots Fusiliers.

BUCHAN, 2nd Lieut. John Crawford, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

BUSHELL, Capt. (Temp. Lieut.-Colonel) Chris., D.S.O., Royal West Surrey Regt.

CARLESS, Ordinary Seaman John Henry (killed in action).

CASSIDY, 2nd Lieut. Bernard Matthew, late Lancashire Fusiliers.

CHRISTIE, Rifleman (Lance-Corporal) John Alex., London Regiment (Upper Holloway).

CLARE, Pte. Geo. Wm., late Lancers (Plumstead).

COLLINGS-WELLS, Capt. (Acting Lieut.-Colonel) Jno. Stanhope, D.S.O., Bedfordshire Regt.

COLUMBINE, Pte. Hbt. Geo., late Machine Gun Corps (Walton-on-the-Naze).

COUNTER, Pte. Jack Thos., The King's (Liverpool Regt.) (Blandford, Dorset).

DAVIES, Corpl. Jno. Thos., South Lancashire Regt. (St. Helens).

DUFFY, Pte. Jas., Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (Letterkenny).

ELLIOTT-COOPER, Capt. (Temp. Lieut.-Colonel) Neville Bowes, D.S.O., M.C., Royal Fusiliers.

EMERSON, Temp. 2nd Lieut. Jas. Saml., late Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

FLOWERDEW, Lieut. Gordon Muriel, late Canadian Cavalry.

FORBES-ROBERTSON, Capt. (Acting Lieut.-Colonel) Jas., D.S.O., M.C., Border Regt.

GEE, Lieut. (Temp. Captain) Robert, M.C., Royal Fusiliers.

GOBIND SINGH, L/Dafadar, Indian Cavalry.

GOURLEY, Sergt. Cyril Ed., M.M., Royal Field Artillery (West Kirby).

HAYWARD, Lieut. (Acting Captain) Rgld. Fk. Johnson, M.C., Wiltshire Regt.

HOLMES, Pte. Thos. Wm., Canadian Mounted Rifles.

HORSFALL, 2nd Lieut. Basil Arthur, late East Lancashire Regt.

JACKSON, Sergt. Harold, East Yorkshire Regt. (Kirtton, near Boston, Lines).

JERRARD, Lieut. Alan, R.A.F. (formerly of the South Staffordshire Regt.).

KINROSS, Pte. Cecil Jno., Canadian Inf.

LASCELLES, 2nd Lieut. (Acting Captain) Arthur Moore, Durham Light Infantry.

MACKENZIE, Lieut. Hugh, D.C.M., late Canadian Machine Gun Corps.

McAULAY, Sergt. Jno., D.C.M., Scots Guards (Stirling).

MCBEATH, Lce.-Corpl. Rbt., Seaforth Highlanders (Kinlochbervie, Lairg, Sutherland).

McCUDDEN, 2nd Lieut. (Temp. Captain) Jas. Byford, D.S.O., M.C., M.M., General List and R.F.C.

MCDUGALL, Sergt. Stanley Rbt., A.I.F.

MCLEOD, 2nd Lieut. Alan Arnett, R.A.F.

McREADY-DIARMID, Temp. Lieut. (Acting Captain) Allastair Malcolm Cluny (formerly Arthur Malcolm McReady Drew), late Middlesex Regt.

MASTERS, Pte. Rd. Geo., Army Service Corps (Southport).

MILLS, Pte. Walter, late Manchester Regt. (Oldham).

MULLIN, Sergt. Geo. Harry, M.M., Canadian Inf.

NICHOLAS, Pte. Hy. Jas., New Zealand Inf.

O'KELLY, Lieut. (Acting Capt.) Chr. Patrick John, M.C., Canadian Inf.

PATON, Lieut. (Acting Capt.) Geo. Hy. Tatham, M.C., late Grenadier Guards.

PEARKES, Capt. (Acting Major) Geo. Randolph, M.C., Canadian Mounted Rifles.

PRYCE, Lieut. (Acting Capt.) Thos. Tannatt, M.C., Grenadier Guards.

ROBERTS, Capt. (Acting Lieut.-Colonel) Frank Crowther, D.S.O., M.C., Worcestershire Regt.

ROBERTSON, Lce.-Corpl. Chas. Graham, M.M., Royal Fusiliers (Merstham).

ROBERTSON, Pte. James Peter, late Canadian Inf.

RUSSELL, Capt. Jno. Fox, M.C., late R.A.M.C., attached Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

SHEPHERD, Rifleman Albert Edward, King's Royal Rifle Corps (Barnsley).

SHERWOOD-KELLY, Major (Acting Lieut.-Colonel) John, C.M.G., D.S.O., Norfolk Regt., commanding a battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

SPACKMAN, Sergt. Chas. Ed., Border Regt. (Fulham).

STONE, Gunner Chas. Edwin, M.M., R.F.A. (Sutton-in-Ashfield).

STONE, Lieut. (Acting Capt.) Walter Napleton, late Royal Fusiliers.

THOMAS, Pte. (Lee.-Corpl.) John, North Staffordshire Regt. ([E.] Manchester).

TOYE, 2nd Lieut. (Acting Capt.) Alfd. Mauriee, M.C., Middlesex Regt.

TRAIN, Corpl. Chas. Wm., London Regt. (Finsbury Park)

WAIN, Temp. Lieut. (Acting Capt.) Rd. Wm. Leslie, late Tank Corps.

WALLACE, Temp. Lieut. Saml. Thos. Dickson, R.F.A.

WATSON, Major (Acting Lieut.-Colonel) Oliver Cyril Spencer, D.S.O. (R. of O.), late King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

WHITFIELD, Pte. Harold, King's Shropshire Light Infantry (Oswestry, Salop).





## CHAPTER CCXLVI.

# THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI: FIRST PHASE.

THE WESTERN FRONT IN NOVEMBER, 1917—HAIG DECIDES TO STRIKE FOR CAMBRAI—HIS MOTIVES DISCUSSED—THE GERMAN DEFENCES—NOVEMBER 20—ATTACK OPENED BY TANKS WITHOUT ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENT—SUCCESS OF THE TANKS—ANALYSIS OF THE BRITISH ADVANCE—CROSSING OF THE CANAL DE L'ESCAUT—THE EMPLOYMENT OF CAVALRY—THE BULLECOURT DIVERSION—DECISION TO CONTINUE THE ATTACK—NOVEMBER 23-27—RESULT OF THE BATTLE

PREVIOUS Chapters have described the war on the northern portion of the line held by the Allied Armies in the Western theatre of war, where the British, aided by the French Army under Anthoine, together with the Belgians, had pressed back the German forces and occupied the ridge extending from Gheluvelt to Passchendaele and slightly beyond it, and running down as far as Messines. The high ground thus occupied gave them a considerable command of view over their opponents' lines and afforded favourable ground for defence against an attack coming from Belgium against the British position round Ypres.

After November 10 there was a comparative lull in the struggle compared with the severe fighting which had previously taken place, but still there were almost daily incidents occurring which need some notice.

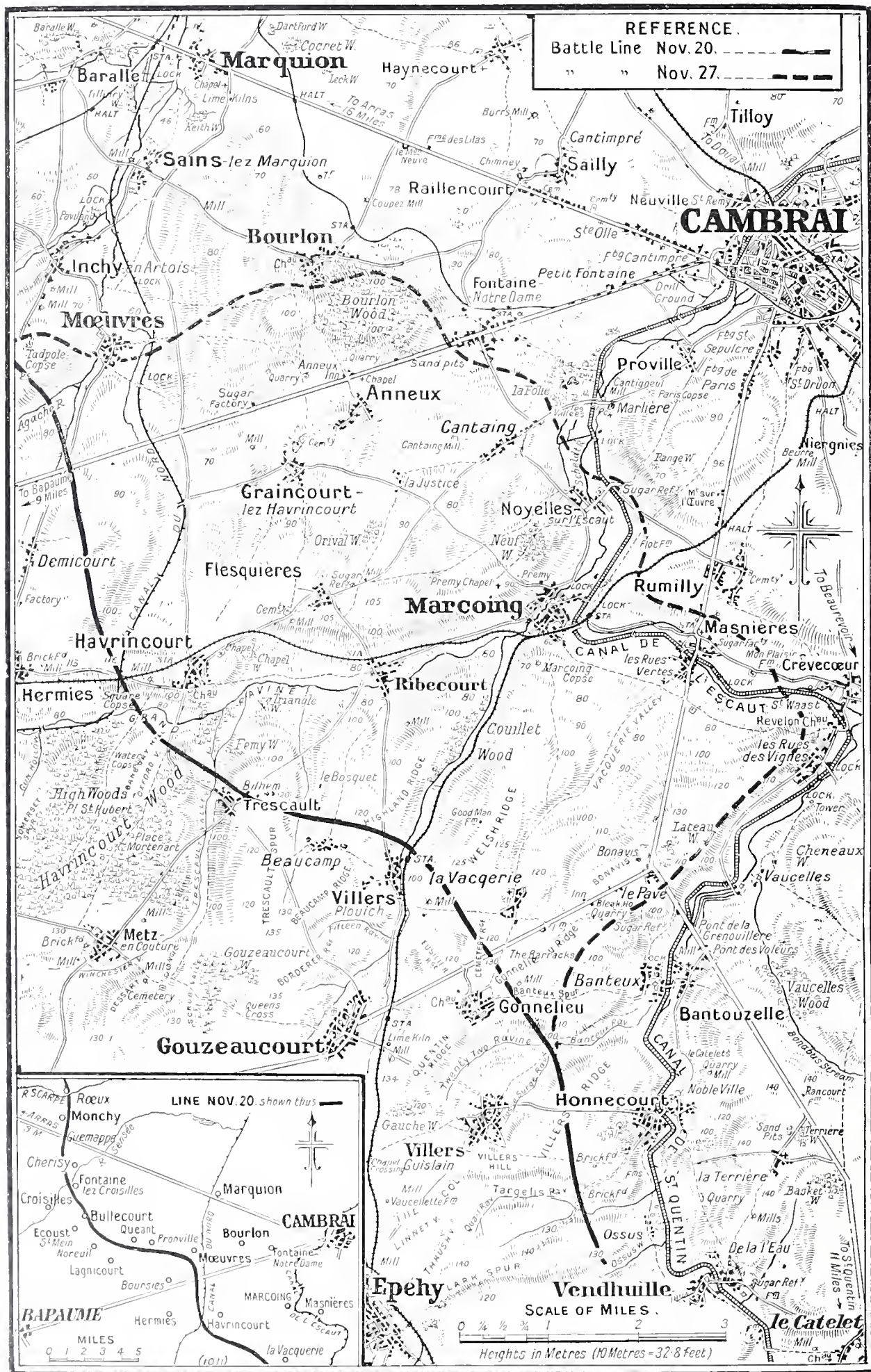
On the 10th there was fighting at many points along the French line of battle from the Oise to Belfort. German raiding attacks during the early morning and previous night north-west of Reims were beaten back by artillery fire and in no instance did they succeed in reaching the French lines. At the same time the French succeeded in penetrating a German trench near Laneuville on the left bank of the Meuse, where they destroyed

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several dug-outs and took a few prisoners. On the right bank of the river the artillery fire was lively on the Chaume Wood front, and there were several engagements with hostile patrols, from whom some prisoners were taken. Further down the front in the Vosges and in Alsace a successful raid was made by the French in the neighbourhood of Senones and Seppois. The next day there was more raiding by both sides in the Woëvre and again north-west of Reims, and a violent attack was made by the Germans on the old point of dispute, Hartmannsweilerkopf; but although they succeeded in entering the outpost defences they were driven back after a fierce hand-to-hand conflict. Another attempt at the Reichacker also failed.

On the 12th, both on the British front and on that of the French, there was nothing but an interchange of artillery fire. The Belgians on the coast, however, made a successful surprise raid on a hostile post south-east of Nieuport, where they did considerable damage and took some prisoners without any loss to themselves. The next day there was again little of moment to record except vigorous artillery fire, especially in the neighbourhood of Ypres and at some points in Champagne and Argonne.

There was a recrudescence of the artillery



THE CAMBRAI OFFENSIVE: NOVEMBER 20-27, 1917.



fight on November 17 on the Belgian battle front round Kippe and against the British line at Passchendaele. In the latter neighbourhood our patrols captured and brought in a few prisoners. The Germans also attacked a French post on the outskirts of the Houthulst Forest, but were driven off by artillery and rifle-fire.

To maintain their strength against any possible advance of our troops in what may be broadly described as the Ypres sector it had

any previous forward movement. Hitherto it cannot be said they had had any very preponderating influence. Employed nearly always as individual auxiliaries to the infantry assaults they had been useful; but the results obtained from them had not been striking. Now they were to take part in considerable numbers as an independent arm and were to do the work which heretofore fell to the guns. They were, to use the French phrase, to be the assaulting artillery, and on them was to



[Official photograph.]

#### AT A TANK DEPÔT: A PETROL DUMP.

become known to Field-Marshal Haig that the Germans had been obliged to reduce the garrisons of other parts of their line to such a degree as to render them open to local defeat at one of the points thus denuded if we chose to attack it.

The sector determined on for the purpose was the Cambrai front, and for his choice of this part of the enemy's line Sir Douglas Haig gave in his subsequent dispatch two reasons. Facilities existed in our lines for the concealment of the preparations for the attack and the ground over which the attack was to be made was on the whole favourable for the employment of our tanks, which were to play a far more important part than they had played in

fall the duty which had hitherto been carried out by annihilating gun-fire, viz., the destruction of the wire entanglements covering the German front line. That they could do this had been proved on many former occasions, but only on a small scale. Now it was to be done on a large one. By doing so the place intended for attack would no longer be indicated by previous artillery preparation and surprise would be possible. Surprise was precisely what was indicated for the enterprise now to be undertaken.

The Germans had brought up already very considerable numbers from Russia where the Revolutionists had ceased all opposition, and it was certain that during the winter more

would arrive. The enemy would thus have far larger forces on the Western front to reinforce and to some extent replace his troops which had been fighting there. Moreover, they had captured a large number of guns of Russian pattern as well as many which we had supplied to our quondam ally. The longer any further attempts against the Germans were put off the greater, therefore, would be their difficulty; and it would be added to by the additional lines of defence that the Germans were preparing behind those already existing on the Cambrai front. It was, moreover, undesirable to allow them a winter's rest in which their tired divisions could recuperate.

It is not clear from Sir Douglas Haig's dispatch what exactly was to be the gain won from the new offensive. He says:

"If, after breaking through the German defence systems on this front, we could secure Bourlon to the north, and establish a good flank position to the east, in the direction of Cambrai, we should be well placed to exploit the situation locally between Bourlon and the Sensée River and to the north-west."

This was apparently the main objective of the advance. It was necessary to protect its right flank by threatening Cambrai; but the capture of this town was quite a secondary consideration, and the chief purpose of any operation against it was "to puzzle the enemy" regarding the British intentions. In short, the left of the British attack was the main business of the advance; the rest was merely a diversion to draw the Germans' attention from it.

To put it briefly, Sir Douglas Haig thought something ought to be done, surprise was the best manner of doing it, the Cambrai sector was the most suited for the purpose. It would not require a large force and the size had to be limited to ensure secrecy, for large numbers nowadays cannot be brought together without detection, if the aviators do their work properly.

There were, of course, grave objections to this plan, and some of them Sir Douglas Haig himself enumerated. The greatest was the fact that the British Army had been engaged for many months in continuous and hard fighting. It had been, as we know, fairly successful, but had suffered severe losses and these had not been adequately made good, while a considerable portion of the reinforcing drafts were not sufficiently trained to bring them up to the standard of the regiments whose depleted ranks they were intended to fill up.

For some time no decision was come to, while Field-Marshal Haig was balancing the merits and demerits of an attack. After some reflection he determined that it would be worth the cost. His resolution was strengthened by the desire indirectly to aid the Italians, although the means at his disposal were further reduced by the necessity of sending troops to Lombardy to render direct aid to them which, indeed, they sorely needed.

The British Commander-in-Chief felt pretty certain that he could keep his preparations secret and could therefore surprise the enemy, and he believed he would have a clear forty-eight hours available before large reinforcements would be brought up against him. He did not propose to continue the attack after that time and, indeed, would stop it sooner "if the results gained and the general situation" did not justify its continuation.

A surprise, therefore, it was to be, without previous artillery preparation which would have betrayed the point chosen for assault; the tanks were to break through the wire of these untouched German defences and open the way for the passage of the infantry. For the additional forces of this arm special assembly trenches had to be made. Extensive as these were the Germans seem not to have noticed their construction. The attack once begun would of course be supported by the usual artillery barrage, which was easy enough, as the range could be accurately determined by range-finders. It was more difficult to arrange for the counter-battery of the more distant German gun-positions, for it was not possible, there being no preliminary artillery preparations, to register the guns properly; they had to rely on the previous work of our photographing aeroplanes, corrected by the reports of observing aviators during the course of the battle. It was a great test of artillery efficiency and well did the Royal Regiment come through it.

The first day of the fighting was to be devoted to breaking through the German defences. This done, provided the situation developed favourably, the long stored-up cavalry were to be sent through to act against the enemy's rear and do all the damage they could to his troops and organizations.

It was explained to the Commanders concerned that all depended, first of all on secrecy, and then on bold and rapid action. For unless the movement was at once successful no great





[Ministry of Information.]

**FIELD-MARSHAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG, K.T.**

**From the official portrait painted by Sir William Orpen, A.R.A.**

results could be looked for—*i.e.*, in other words it would be either a great success or else of no utility. There was certainly a possibility of the first, but the second might also happen.

The French Commander-in-Chief had promised to give the British every assistance. He arranged to keep the Germans still engaged on

his part of the Allied line and further disposed a strong force of infantry and cavalry in readiness to back up Sir Douglas Haig's attack if success crowned it. On November 20 some units of the French force were actually brought forward; but unfortunately the British progress was neither so great nor





THE VILLAGE OF RIBÉCOURT AFTER ITS CAPTURE BY THE BRITISH.

sufficiently long lived to warrant their employment. Nevertheless they were still kept within reach in case subsequent events made it desirable to use them. All was now ready for the British attack.

The German position to be assaulted was formidable in character and had been considerably improved during the late spring and summer of 1917. The main line of defence formed part of the original Hindenburg line and extended from Banteux on the St. Quentin Canal to Havrincourt, a distance of about six miles. Here it turned sharply north and skirted through the southern part of Moeuvres. The Canal du Nord in front of this portion of the line, although emptied of its water, still formed an important dry ditch, 60 ft. wide, with revetted sides. From Moeuvres the line went in front of Inchy and a little to the north of Pronville to Quéant, round which it curved on the west and south. In front of it and about 1,000 yards from it there was an advanced line of a number of strong points connected together by a deep, narrow trench, unprovided with dug-outs but with barbed wire entanglements in front of them. A good deal of the wire was of extra stoutness, the barbs being over an inch in length and so closely set together as to make it impossible to grasp it with the hands, and it was all carefully flanked by machine-gun posts. The main Hindenburg trenches in it had been made of far more than the customary breadth, up to 16 ft., in the hope, a vain one, that the tanks could not pass over it. There was a fire step the usual depth below the ground level—*i.e.*, about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ft.—while the bottom of the

trench was about the same depth below the fire step. On the rear face there was also a fire step which could be used to take troops in reverse who had passed by it. Its front was covered by a deep belt of very nearly continuous wire, with its near side 50 yards in advance of the trench. Behind this were subsidiary patches of wire arranged with gaps along which the enemy might be supposed to crowd to get at the main trench and could then be counter-attacked. All these gaps were carefully arranged to be swept by machine-guns. The lines were connected by deep and narrow communication trenches, which in some places were turned so as to front towards the lines and formed short lengths of support to it. There were the usual deep and strong dug-outs at frequent intervals. Among these were several well-fortified posts, as La Vacquerie and the north-east corner of Havrincourt Wood, and, speaking generally, any favourable points, such as Lateau Wood, Graincourt-les-Havrincourt, Flesquières, Ribécourt, Marcoing, Fontaine-Notre-Dame, La Folio Wood, were also strongly fortified.

Behind the main Hindenburg line and at a distance ranging from 1,000 yards to over a mile was a second line called the Hindenburg reserve line. Behind it, again, was a third line known as the Beaufort-Masnières-Marquion line. This derived additional strength from the Canal de l'Escaut and the river of that name (the Scheldt) which ran alongside it. Below Crevecoeur the canal was known as the Canal de St. Quentin. These lines were similar in construction to the main line. Altogether, with their ramifications and switch lines, there were in reality five organized systems. The



distance from the foremost defences to the rear was about three to four miles.

The Hindenburg main line ran from below Marcoing across the southern front of Flesquières, then parallel to the Canal du Nord, at a varying distance up to 1,500 yards from it, through the village of Moeuvres where it crosses the canal, then to the east, north of Pronville, and so on past and behind Quéant. The advanced line was situated down in the valley below Cambrai, while the reserve lines were on the reverse slope of the crest overhanging it. The whole system may be regarded as a compromise between the old method of a strong first line and the new one of a lightly occupied front line. For experience had shown that this did not offer sufficient resistance to a determined attack. In the present case the strong first line was already in existence and the works thrown up in front of it represent the plan of a number of more lightly held obstacles, strung together to form a line intended to break up the enemy's attack and so enable it to be dealt with in detail by counter-strokes.

A special feature of the central line of defences was a long tunnel, 20 to 40 ft. below the surface, with openings at frequent intervals. In it the garrisons could be kept in perfect security till wanted to man the parapets. The tunnel also served as a covered means of safe communication for troops moving along the

line, as it extended for several miles—according to some reports for 13 miles. It had been constructed by Russian prisoners.

The garrison of these defences included the 54th Division, the 240th Division, and the 20th Division, these three sufficing for the six miles held at the usual rate of a division to every two miles. As had so frequently happened before, another division, the 20th Landwehr Division, had come up to relieve one of those in the line just before the attack took place. Of the three divisions just mentioned the 54th was on the German left, the 240th in the centre, the 20th on the right. The 20th Landwehr Division appears to have acted as a reserve and, in addition, there was the 107th Division just come from Russia, and the 9th Reserve Division.

Sir Julian Byng had under him the 6th, 12th, 20th, 29th, 36th, 51st and 62nd Infantry Divisions and the 1st and 5th Cavalry Divisions.

Cambrai lies in a depression which opens out from it in an east-north-eastern direction of practically level ground to the Sensée, which, with its marshy banks, forms a great obstacle to the movements of troops. It is canalized as far as Douai, where it joins the canal of that name. From Palluel the canal to Estrun forms an additional obstacle to the unconfined wanderings of the stream itself, mitigated only by a good number of bridges which take the



MARCOING CHURCH

[Official photograph.]



fairly numerous roads over both ; but these, of course, could be easily destroyed in case of necessity. It formed therefore a good defence to the British left flank when extended in this direction. The line of our Third Army was practically the same as that it had occupied throughout the summer and was roughly parallel to that held by the enemy. Taking Havrincourt as a starting point, it ran some hundred yards north-east of Trescault and about a thousand yards on the same side of Beaucamp and Villers-Plouich, where it trended off to the south, going three hundred yards to the east of Gonnelieu and then a mile to the east of Villers-Guislain. From Havrincourt a long, narrow spur, like a finger, projected out as far as Marcoing at a height of about 330 ft. above datum level, separated from the south by a ravine and stream. South of the ravine the ground again rose and ran at the same height from Havrincourt Forest to Trescault and Villers-Plouich, where it turned sharply back along a small stream known as the Bois Couillet, which it traversed a little east of the village named, and then projected out in a long ridge known as the Welsh Ridge, towards Les Rues-des-Vignes on the Scheldt Canal. To the east of

this there was a feature called the Bonavis Ridge. From Trescault another spur pushed out towards Ribécourt, to which the name of the Highland Ridge had been given. Beyond the Scheldt Canal the ground was again higher round Seranvillers and Forenville, from which it sloped downwards towards Cambrai. Straight east from Moeuvres lay the elevation known as the Bourlon Wood, near the village of that name. The valley between Bourlon Wood and the ridge jutting out from Havrincourt Wood to Marcoing sloped down on the eastern side of the Scheldt Canal and river of that name to Cambrai. The canal turns abruptly north from Marcoing and runs through this town.

The ground over which the attack was to be made consisted of gentle slopes, seldom with a gradient of more than 1 in 60, with no obstacles except the German defences. In contrast to most of our recent fighting there was on this occasion an absence of mud, for the ground was green and not one mass of shell-craters. It was indeed part of the ground which Hindenburg had devastated in his retreat. Since then it had not been cultivated and had produced nothing but a crop of thistles. The canal formed an obstacle on the right flank of



"GRANNY."

*Official photograph.*





[Official photograph.]

## CAPTURED GERMAN GUNS AT RIBÉCOURT AWAITING REMOVAL.

the advance and protected it. If Bourslon Wood were captured and held, the defences of the Germans about Quéant would be taken in reverse and it would have been necessary for them to have fallen back. It is evident therefore that the Germans had been bound to make the Bourslon Wood a particularly strong point. The wood, the village behind it, and the village of Fontaine-Notre-Dame formed a complete position. The last-named, a village on the Bapaume road  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Cambrai, guarded the eastern flank of the wood and made its capture necessary to secure the right flank of our attack on the wood from a counter-stroke. It was strongly fortified and formed a point of great importance in connexion with the Hindenburg reserve line, which ran in this part of the field back from Noyelles-sur-l'Escaut through Bourslon Wood and Bourslon to Marquion. Bourslon itself served as a keep or secondary position to the wood, useful as a rallying point for troops driven out of it or as a supporting position for counter-attack. Bourslon, a real wood, hardly touched by shell-fire, was planted thickly with oak and ash, with very dense undergrowth difficult to penetrate, except at the drives which went through it. With the village of the same name on the north side, it was a position which could not be left in the hands of the Germans if any advance were to be made in a northerly direction or indeed if the

line near Cambrai was to be maintained. The top formed an hour-glass shaped prominence, the ridge line of which ran roughly east and west, about 100 feet higher than Anneux and Cantaing and 130 feet above Fontaine-Notre-Dame. The trenches on the southern skirt of Bourslon Wood were cunningly concealed by screens of green canvas, and it was not till our men saw German faces peeping up above them that they appreciated the fact that they concealed trenches outside the wood border. There was also a quarry there which had been prepared for defence. West of the wood the ground sloped gently at first to a long spur, the general direction of which was northerly, as far as Sains-lez-Marquion. The crest line of this spur is some 60 feet below Bourslon Wood and from it the ground sloped a little more steeply down to the Canal du Nord.

On November 20 the day broke with an overcast grey sky but no rain, so that the tanks could move freely over the surface of the ground without slipping. The Germans were quite unaware that an attack was about to commence, although at five o'clock a sudden burst of shell fire seemed at first to indicate they knew that some movement was threatened.\* How-

\* Some time after the battle the German Air Force claimed to have observed the concentration of fresh British forces. They certainly made no use of their observations, for prisoners' statements and the actual progress of the fight showed we had caught the enemy napping.



ever, it quickly died down and all remained quiet except for an occasional shell or a slight rattle of machine-gun fire directed against some sentry or presumed observation post. That the Germans suspected no imminent attack is certain, and the probable reason was the absence of all preliminary bombardment to clear away the wire which was very formidable over the front attacked and which they probably relied on as a complete protection from surprise. Night after night our tanks had been crawling up slowly towards Havrincourt and to our lines behind Flesquières and down south behind Trescault and Villers-Pluich, moving by many and devious roads to allow an advance on a broad front. By day they took shelter in the woods and copses or in hollows where they were unlikely to be observed. The country behind our lines was eminently suited for the secrecy of the movement, being rolling, so that the alternate rise and fall made many places favourable for concealment. The movements of the extra troops required for the assault were so carefully covered that they were not observed by the enemy; at least he betrayed no knowledge of them. Nor did he

observe the making of extra trenches to form assembly points where the men could be collected before going over to the assault.

The extra infantry men brought up for the assault bivouacked in every little available hollow, for there was not enough trench room for all. They lay about without movement, yet with suppressed eagerness shown in the low whispers in which they expressed their delight at being able again "to go for Fritz." It was a well thought out and ably executed movement.

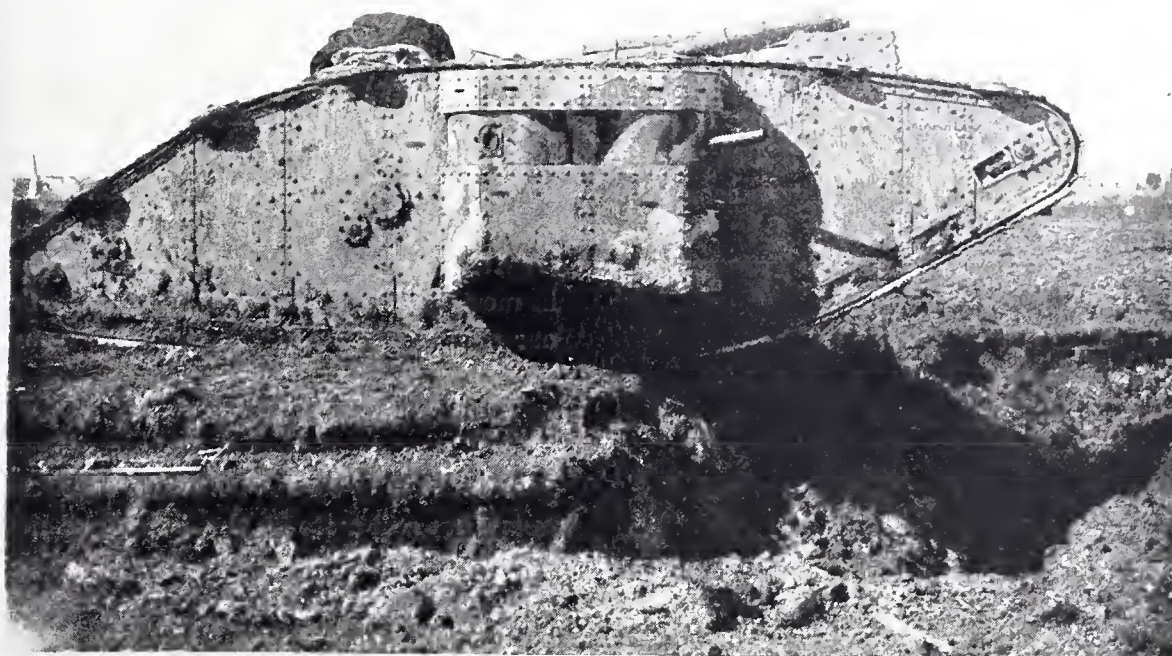
At 6.20 a.m. the attack commenced, covered to some extent by the morning mist and darkness. It was not limited to the actual line intended to be carried, which measured some six miles and extended from the east of Connelieu to the Canal du Nord opposite Hermies. For along the whole of the British front south of the Scarpe down to Epéhy, a distance of 20 miles, demonstrations were made with great vigour. Strong artillery fire was directed on the German line, combined with gas attacks and smoke to keep the enemy in the belief that assaults were intended in various



[Official photograph.]

MACHINE GUNNERS FILLING THE BARREL-CASE WITH WATER FOR COOLING THE BARREL.





[Official photograph.]

## TANK CROSSING A TRENCH.

directions. Actual attacks were also made east of Epéhy and between Bullecourt and Fontaine-lez-Croisilles. Thus along the whole 20 miles the Germans were kept on the alert while the actual attacks from Epéhy and Bullecourt-Fontaine-lez-Croisilles, ushered in as they were by artillery fire, served to attract more especially the attention of the enemy to these two points as indicating the British intention to advance from them. A severe artillery fire was also kept up from Nieuport to the neighbourhood of Ypres.

But the real assault was, as has been seen, to be delivered without preliminary gun-fire; the tanks were to do its work and plough their way through the German wire entanglements, making huge lanes through which the British infantry could push to the assault.

At the hour named a signal gun went off; there was a slight pause, and then the whole line burst out with a mighty roar of artillery. It was the commencement of the fire directed on the known positions of the trenches and batteries, and of the barrage which preceded the tanks. The latter moved stolidly on, covered from the view of the enemy's guns by a smoke barrage, for which the wind was

favourable, as it blew towards the Germans. Their arrival at the advanced line through the smoke clouds and morning mist was really the first intimation to the Germans that the British were upon them. Passing over the few hundred yards which separated our line from the enemy's, the tanks crashed through the wire which covered the advanced posts of the Germans, and then proceeded to deal with them in detail. One would pass bodily over a nest of Germans in some machine-gun pit, crushing down men and weapons in one horrible mass, another would take up post so as to enfilade on either side a branch of trench, driving the garrison to seek shelter in dug-outs or in flight. Tanks might be seen clearing the gun crews out of a German battery and capturing the guns, patrolling along the broad trenches or moving along the rear edge ready to come down into it to deal with any post they saw. Others, having crushed the resistance out of the German advanced line, pushed on steadily for the Hindenburg main line.

Never had the tanks played such an important part before. On previous occasions they had been used in tens. Gathered together in groups this time they were in hundreds. They

advanced in their formidable array, their own General—Brig.-Gen. H. J. Elles—leading them in his tank, with his banner displayed from it. His last address to the armour-clad warriors was to remember that “every tank was to do its damnedest,” and certainly no tank failed to do all it could. A large number were put out of action, but to the rest was most certainly due in great measure the success of the enterprise. For without them to clear the way the infantry would never have been able to penetrate the wire entanglements. Behind the tanks came the infantry, who were soon busy



[Official portrait by Sir W. Orpen, A.R.A.]

**BRIG.-GENERAL HUGH J. ELLES, C.B.,  
D.S.O.**

**Commanded the Tank Corps at Cambrai**

completing the work the tanks had begun. The advance of the tanks was apparently unnoticed at first, for it was not till they nearly reached the first line that any fire was directed against them and then it was feeble. The Germans were evidently dazed by the sudden fierceness of the attack. Many sought refuge in the dug-outs and tunnels from which they had only emerged a few minutes before when the thunder of our guns, opening their fire on the German artillery positions and putting down a barrage to cut the advanced defences from any succour from the rear, gave the alarm. There was no great resistance offered to the advance; only at isolated points did sternly determined men work their machine-guns or use their rifles. What the tanks left ungarnered

the infantry soon gathered in, and so little were our men struck by the hostile fire that they went on talking, cheering, shouting without a check; it was more like a peaceful march than an attack on an enemy. Their main difficulty was not the foe but the growth of thistles which here and there they encountered on their passage over the uncultivated No Man's Land. When the first German defences were reached there was little to do beyond disposing of isolated spots of resistance and the task resolved itself into the capture of these and clearing out by bombing of the few dug-outs and shelters there. Many prisoners were taken from the Germans, and those who ran back were in most cases knocked over by the rifle fire of our men or by the machine-gun fire from the advancing tanks. Our own casualties were almost negligible.

The complete character of the surprise was proved not only by the bolting of the German troops but still more by the absolute confusion they left behind in the secure shelters in which they had lived so long unmolested and which they did not believe could be attacked without ample warning being given, not only by the preparatory artillery fire but also by their own look-outs. In one subterranean structure, to give an example, there were sleeping bunks with the blankets hurriedly thrown back, showing the suddenness of the alarm. A candle which had burnt itself out was on a deal table, a pair of boots in one corner, two steel helmets hung on a wall, and a loaf of what the Germans called bread stood on the corner of a shelf. A continuous trail of letters and documents, letters from home friends, from sweethearts, from wives showed plainly in what hot haste the owners had fled, out of the dug-out along the passage and up the steps which led to the trench, and thence back to the rear and safety. The occupants, non-commissioned officers apparently from the letters, heard the alarm and sudden bombardment, jumped from between their blankets, scrambled into their boots and jackets and bolted, some of them even leaving their rifles behind in their haste. In other dug-outs were all kinds of clothing, cigars, spirits, water bottles, field glasses, little personal souvenirs which would not have been lightly left but for the hurry of their owners to seek personal safety. In many places rifles were found left in the dug-outs, in others they were found resting against the revetments of the trenches. All betokened a very sudden,



precipitate, and undisciplined flight. The German guns did little, and apparently the number of guns they had was quite inadequate to reply with any vigour or effect to our artillery, nor did they give much help to their infantry at the beginning of the advance, for there was little shell-fire from them sent down against our men. This enabled us to bring up field guns and field howitzers and even some pieces of comparatively heavy calibre, and as the tide of our infantry attack went forward these took up positions on the higher ground in the open and, from the shorter range thus obtained, poured in an annihilating fire on the German works. So great was the success of the opening assault that the portion of the Hindenburg main line attacked, with the advanced works in front of it, were all captured before 10.30 a.m., and the British troops at once pushed on to deal with the Hindenburg reserve line.

As has been said, the commencement of the day was fine though misty, but before noon the weather changed and a strong westerly wind sprang up, with a pretty constant drizzle when it did not become a heavy shower, and an ever-present mist with rain clouds low-lying. This, while in some ways advantageous to our infan-

try, as it hid them to a considerable extent from the view of the enemy, was very disadvantageous to our aeroplanes. In an attack it is of the greatest importance to inform the commanders in rear what the units fighting in immediate contact with the enemy are doing and how the fight is progressing, so that they may know when to send in supports and otherwise direct the battle. Our airmen did their best to carry out these duties, and to fulfil them they usually had to fly within 50 feet of the ground. But even at this height they often lost contact with our infantry hidden by the mist and rain. Yet they contrived not only to send back much useful information but also to take an active part in the fight. They dropped bombs on the enemy's artillery batteries, on his transport and railways. His aerodromes also came in for a good share of missiles. In addition to this, machine-gun fire was directed against the batteries scattered about the defence lines and against the infantry in the German trenches. Such boldness was not to be gained without loss and 11 of our machines failed to return.

In this second stage of the advance the 12th (Eastern) Division formed the right of the British. It moved along the Bonavis Ridge



[Official photograph.]

SOME OF THE RIFLES CAPTURED BY ENGLISH COUNTY TROOPS.



towards Le Pavé and the Lateau Wood. The village did not offer any prolonged resistance, but the wood proved a much tougher job. It was very strongly defended and many German guns were in action from it, including several 5.9 cm. howitzers. The struggle was bitter and long, and it needed the aid of the tanks to complete the work, nor was it till the afternoon that the British finally triumphed, driving the enemy completely out and taking his guns besides some prisoners.

The 20th (Light) Division advanced on the left of the 12th Division. Its first objective was the village of La Vacquerie, which was taken without much difficulty. It then proceeded to assault the German works on the Welsh Ridge. These were much superior in strength to those of the village and a good deal of sharp fighting took place before they were finally captured.

The 6th Division prolonged the British line of attack north of the 20th Division, and it was sent against Ribécourt. This village lay down in a shallow valley, deep enough, however, to hide it from our line. The village had been wrecked, but the ruins served to build up a very powerful defensive point with especially good

subterranean cover, and there were many machine-gun posts constructed in houses and cellars. Under part of the village was a series of catacombs which had been extended and improved until they formed absolutely safe cover for the garrison. But this feeling of safety when below ground seems to have acted as a deterrent to the Germans, who were unwilling to leave it, and when they did come up had less desire to fight than to surrender. For when men of an Eastern county regiment came down from the direction of Trescault, many of the garrison came out, hands up, to yield themselves. Even the commanding officer and his staff seem to have thought discretion the better part of valour and to have gone off rapidly in the direction of Cambrai, leaving their elaborate dug-out at the northern end of the village with every mark of hasty departure. But here and there were sharp combats, although, after a comparatively short fight, the British got the upper hand and captured the whole of the village and with it a considerable amount of stores, stacks of hand-grenades, and Véry lights, all carefully piled in special compartments of the catacombs. There was also a considerable amount of material for dug-outs, such as timber



*(Official photograph.)*

HIGHLAND TERRITORIALS CROSSING A TRENCH BY MEANS OF A DUCKBOARD.





[Official photograph.]

## SOME OF THE PRISONERS TAKEN BY HIGHLAND TERRITORIALS.

balks and steel rails. On a light railway which passed by the southern end of the village were a number of wagons laden with provisions which were evidently being brought up when the attack surprised them, but the men in charge had bolted away and left them for our men.

On the left of the 6th Division was the 62nd (West Riding) Territorial Division, which was directed to assault Havrincourt. This village was strongly fortified, and it took some time to clear out the garrisons from the houses, which had to be dealt with in detail, and bombed or bayoneted before they would yield. A strong point known as Vesuvius just outside the village was a difficult nut to crack. But it did yield and shortly afterwards blew up; fortunately our men had then gone on beyond it. Probably it had been prepared for destruction by the Germans and our men had failed to find the leads to the mines. After a fairly prolonged struggle, however, the village was compelled to surrender, as was the château which formed a species of reduct to the village. The tanks did great service in the capture of Havrincourt. Not only did they flatten out the wire but they forced a way into the village itself and helped to reduce many of the strong points in it, including Havrincourt Château and the

railway station, besides assisting to repel a counter-attack made against the former shortly after it had been taken by our men.

The capture of this village and Ribécourt secured the flanks of the 51st Highland Territorial Division, which moved in between the 6th and 62nd Divisions over the Grand Ravine against Flesquières. This village, situated on the hill which rises up from the Grand Ravine at a fairly steep slope, was a difficult point to capture. Its external defences were strong and covered by a good barrier of wire, while the village itself was prepared for defence in the usual complete way. On the eastern side there were several batteries in shelter pits. The troops till they crested the hill were to some extent protected from the fire of the works on the southern side of the village; but, when they attempted to close, the heavy machine-gun fire they met with held up the attack. Very severe fighting took place. This was especially the case at the Château. Round the grounds of this was a thick brick wall, which, being abundantly loopholed and untouched by artillery fire, formed a most formidable obstacle in the path of our men, who were moreover struck in flank by a severe machine-gun fire which swept its approaches.





[Official photograph.]

## THE SPOIL BANK ON THE CANAL DU NORD.

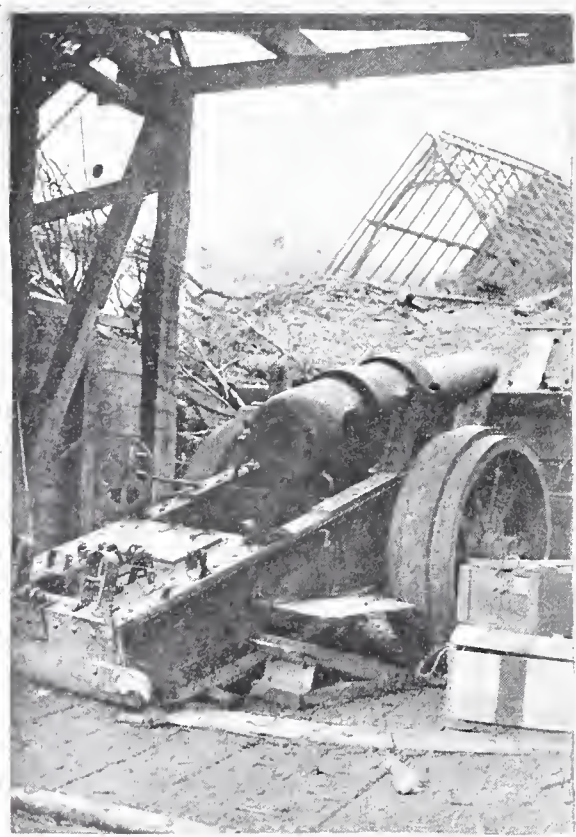
The tanks too were unable to render as much assistance as usual. The wire was very strong, and, although flattened to a great extent by the tanks, still remained in loose coils and was a great impediment to the Scottish infantry following after them. One of the German artillery batteries was in action just behind the edge of the hill where it sloped downwards to the north, and from this comparatively secure position managed to knock over many of the tanks. One German artillery officer playing the part of Eleazar was seen to make hit after hit on them, serving his

gun alone till he was killed. Probably he was attached to one of the anti-tank batteries, the guns of which are not usually kept concentrated but rather worked as individual pieces placed at likely points for tank attacks such as was the case in this instance. The surviving tanks, however, came up to the eastern outskirts of the village and during the night helped to keep down the German machine-gun fire.

The tide of fighting at Flesquières fluctuated to and fro, but the defences external to the village were all captured by noon, though the village still held out. Here the Durhams captured a German field battery, which they were able to get fairly close up to, favoured by the ground; then they shot down the detachments and carried the guns. The Scottish Territorials took some guns on the eastern side.

The 36th (Ulster) Division, which was on the left of the British line advancing from the neighbourhood of Hermies, had a most formidable series of obstacles to deal with. The Hindenburg advanced line at the point where they went forward was on the western side of the Canal du Nord, covered with a wide belt of wire entanglement. Behind it was the canal, which formed a dry ditch for the Hindenburg main line on the eastern side, which was of the usual strong character, protected by many "pill-boxes" and other strong concrete works and dug-outs.

It will be observed that the position of the German line west of the canal was open to an enfilade attack from Havrincourt, and this was what the Ulster men took advantage of. A frontal attack through deep uncut wire would have been impossible. They had no tanks to



[Official photograph.]

## GUN CAPTURED BY HIGHLANDERS AT FLESQUIÈRES.



help them, but they succeeded in breaking through the wire by infantry bombers and shells thrown from trench mortars in our trenches, at a point near where the 62nd Division had captured Havrincourt, and then set to work to bomb their way regularly up the German trench on the western side of the canal. Although held up in places they cleared this front line for a good space without very much difficulty. Then they moved forward against a strong position organized by the enemy on the spoil bank made from the earth thrown up when the Canal du Nord had been constructed. This stood some 60 ft. above the canal bank and was defended by tunnelled casemates constructed in its mass, from which the garrison only emerged to occupy their trenches. By about 9 o'clock the Ulstermen had got the upper hand and captured with the spoil bank a considerable number of prisoners from the dug-outs. Then they brought their Lewis guns to the top of the mound and swept the German trench to the north with their fire. But the canal proved a difficult obstacle to pass over. Gallant men from the shipbuilding works of Belfast tried to build a bridge across, but did not succeed in achieving it till dusk. Nor were they then able to make much progress. A powerful

machine-gun fire from the direction of Moeuvres and Graincourt held them back. The latter point presented all the most elaborate constructions which were found from time to time in the German lines, and it was not till it was captured that the 62nd Division was able to make contact with the 36th, and the two moving on together pressed through the Hindenburg reserve line north of it, the 36th somewhat behind to guard the left flank from a German counter-attack. The capture of Graincourt enabled the 36th Division to make further progress to the Bapaume-Cambrai road, which marked the foremost point attained and held that day. It is true that some parties reached Moeuvres, but these were driven back by counter-attack. The movement on Graincourt was supported by our tanks, which turned the tables on two anti-tank guns in action near that village and destroyed them. But the 62nd Division did not halt here. Continuing the movement Anneux was attacked by it, supported by cavalry, and before night fell the greater part of this village too was in our hands.

The 62nd Division had made a most successful advance. They had gained four and a half miles of ground, burst through two lines of German defences, and captured the villages of Havrin-



[Official photo-graph.]

CAVALRY ON THE MOVE: A TANK IN THE DISTANCE.



court, Graincourt and Anneux. The position thus won formed rather a prominent salient, but the danger on the right flank was somewhat mitigated by the 6th Division, which, after taking Ribécourt, had pushed on during the afternoon towards Noyelles-sur-l'Escaut and sent infantry patrols accompanied by cavalry into this village. As more cavalry came up part was ordered out towards Cantaing, so that the British line, if not very strongly held, occupied with the 6th and 62nd Divisions and a considerable force of cavalry a line from the Canal de l'Escaut round through Cantaing and Anneux. The 36th Division on the left flank of these two divisions carried the new line back to our old trench system, having during the day driven the Germans out of the Hindenburg line and the advanced positions in front of it on the west side of the Canal du Nord up to the Cambrai-Bapaume road. It was a very creditable and well-conducted operation, showing a complete grasp of the requirements of the tactical situation.

In the centre, as has been seen, the 20th Division had captured La Vacquerie and the Welsh Ridge; the 12th Division had reached Lateau Wood. The 29th Division had, while

this was going on, moved on the left of the 20th Division and the right of the 6th Division. Accompanied by tanks it fought its way to the Canal de l'Escaut and proceeded to seize the passages over it at Marcoing and Masnières. The former village was captured just in the nick of time. A tank had pushed on and arrived at the bridge at the very moment when the electric leads were being laid to blow up the mines prepared on the bridge to demolish it. The party of Germans engaged on this work were at once shot down and the passage secured without further difficulty. Neuf Wood was also captured, and on Premy Chapel Ridge a German field battery was taken by the West Yorkshires.

Masnieres was strong and possessed a large amount of underground cover for the garrison, and here we were not so lucky. The majority of the Germans above ground ran back over the bridge to the eastern side of the canal. At the bridge, where there were several machine-guns, there was a short but sharp struggle, and when the Germans saw a tank coming they retired. The enemy then blew a mine, succeeded in partially destroying the bridge, and the tank managed to



PACK-HORSES, CAVALRY, AND MOTOR MACHINE-GUNS PROCEEDING TO THEIR RENDEZVOUS ON WHAT WAS GERMAN GROUND.

[Official photograph.]





[Official photograph.]

## REFUGEES FROM CANTAING.

complete its destruction. For venturing to cross over with misplaced zeal it broke through the already shaken structure, completing the demolition and was itself engulfed in the waters of the canal, where, however, it does not appear to have sustained much injury, or its crew either. Some of the infantry managed to cross the canal and river as best they could and pushed further up the slope leading to Rumilly. But the destruction of the bridge prevented the artillery and cavalry coming to their assistance, and in the northern portion of Masnières the enemy still clung on. This gave the Germans a foothold for further resistance, and as we could not go forward with our attack they occupied Rumilly and that part of the Marquion-Masnières-Beaurevoir line which lay just south of this village. In the latter a prolonged fight also went on in the German dug-outs, which were labyrinthine and of considerable extent, and it required care on the part of our men not to be sniped by the hostile infantry in them, who knew every inch of the galleries. In the afternoon a squadron of the Fort Garry Horse from the Canadian Cavalry Brigade managed to pass over by the locks in Masnières and captured a German battery in action on the high ground. Doubtless the charge was facilitated by the slope covering the cavalymen till they were close on the guns. But not content with this exploit they went on again and drove off a body of some 300 German infantry. Going on still further, they continued their success until more than half the horses of the squadron had been

killed. Then stampeding their horses, so as to give the Germans the belief that they had completely retired, they acted dismounted and withdrew back to shelter in a hollow road. Here they held on until darkness enabled them to withdraw and fight their way back by the bridge they had crossed and regain the British line.\* The Canadian Horse brought back several prisoners taken in what Sir Douglas Haig justly characterized as "a most gallant exploit."

At Masnières we were able to release a number of the inhabitants who had been in the German hands. For so complete was the surprise that the garrison (some 400 men) had not had time to remove them before the British entered the southern end of the village. It was a touching sight to see the delight of the poor people at being released from the captivity in which they had been held since 1914. Wan and weak, the women in some cases carrying with feeble steps their poor emaciated children. "For three years," said the Mayor, "we lived in a nightmare, and now we seem to be in a dream too good to be true." With food hardly enough to keep body and soul together they had managed to subsist on what was given them by the American Relief Committee (whose work was subsequently taken over by the Spanish-Dutch Committee). But for this they would literally have starved. It need hardly be said that the houses had been completely cleared of all

\* A temporary bridge had also been thrown over the canal, but it is not certain that they used it or whether they used the footbridge at the lock.



[Official photograph.]

**CAVALRY WATERING THEIR HORSES AND LIMBERS GOING UP TO THE GUNS.**

valuables, furniture, etc. Similar sights were seen at the other liberated villages. The inhabitants, old men, women, children, came out bringing what little remained to them and streamed back towards our lines, where safety, food, and above all respite from the horrible treatment they had received, awaited them.

The net result of the day's operations was that the advanced line, the Hindenburg main line and the Hindenburg reserve line had been broken through on a front which, taken on the arc, was over 10 miles long and that the distance penetrated measured up to four and a half miles at the farthest points Anneux and Noyelles-sur-l'Escaut, on the left, and on the right by St. Waast on the Canal de l'Escaut, while on the extreme left about two and a half miles had been seized. The checks at Flesquières and Masnières had been unfortunate. The former had hindered progress in the left centre, while the latter had prevented the cavalry crossing in any great force and stopped the further exploitation of the last German line of defence from either side of Masnières.

It had been part of Sir Douglas Haig's plan to make use of his cavalry on a large scale. Being a cavalry officer, he was naturally

desirous of seeing his own arm play a good part in the battle, and he hoped, when once a way was made through the enemy's triple defences, to pour his horsemen through "to raid the enemy's communications, disorganize his system of command, damage his railways and interfere as much as possible with the arrival of his reinforcements." In other words, the British cavalry, once past the barrier, was to devote its attention to the German troops and act at a distance too far in advance of the line captured by the tanks and the infantry to allow the latter at any rate to perform this part of the operation. Now it must be remembered that the British cavalry, although it had done excellent work as fighting cavalry on a small scale in several instances which have been enumerated in previous pages from the days of the retreat from Mons onwards, had, up to the time of the Battle of Cambrai, had no opportunity of showing its prowess on a large scale. It was hoped that in the course of the fighting begun on November 20 such an opportunity might arise. Two cavalry divisions, the 1st and the 5th, the latter composed of cavalry from India, were told off for the enterprise. This mass of horsemen, numbering some thousands, had been quietly brought up just before the battle was



timed to begin and hidden a short distance from the front. On the morning of the 20th they were all in readiness for their advance with their horse artillery and at 10.30 a.m. they were ordered to move up. The progress of the battle, however, was unfortunately not such as to enable the Commander-in-Chief's plan to be carried out. The check at Flesquières hindered on the left flank, the loss of the bridge at Masnières did the same on the right.

many machine-gun emplacements, struck into German detachments retreating from villages, taken many prisoners and two batteries of artillery which were fairly ridden down. But on November 20, speaking as a whole, while the sum total of gallant services done by small bodies was considerable, no great and striking success was obtained by the British cavalry.

While the fighting on the main battlefield



[Official photograph.]

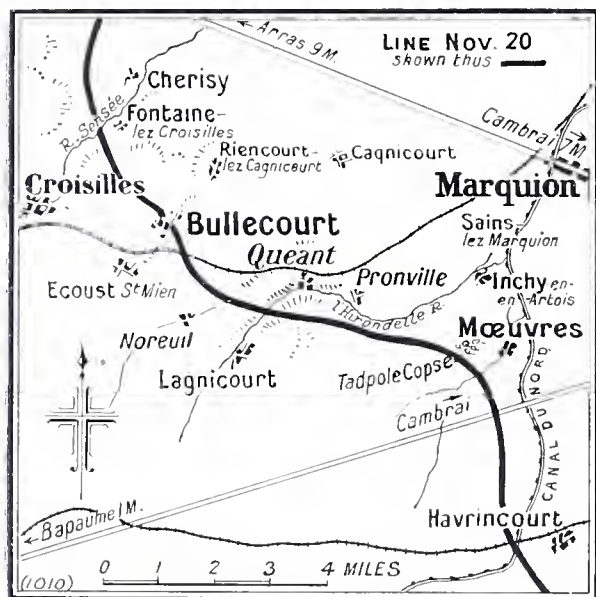
#### CAMOUFLAGED GERMAN 5.9-in. NAVAL GUN BROUGHT IN BY A TANK.

Although in the latter case a temporary bridge was constructed, as previously described, this did not permit the passage of a whole cavalry division, and was entirely unsuited for horse artillery and for the necessary equipment of ammunition, supply waggons, etc. The action of the cavalry here, then, was entirely limited to the squadron of Canadian Horse which contrived to cross. But on the left flank and centre more was accomplished. Here patrols penetrated into Flesquières even before it had been completely captured. Parties of cavalry crossed the Canal de l'Escaut at Marcoing and some had occupied Anneux, where two 8-in. howitzers and nine 5.9-in. guns were captured, and Cantaing; other had turned the flank of

was in progress the diversion attack on Bullecourt, about eight miles north-east of Hermies, was also being carried out. Here the 3rd Division and the 16th (Irish) Division took part, attacking the enemy's line side by side. The preliminary bombardment had been going on for some weeks, and from time to time smoke barrages had been put up and gas clouds sent towards the German line, and this perpetual blistering had kept the enemy in continual fear of attack. The German wire entanglements had been cut by our guns ready for our men when they went forward. The Irish attacked west of Bullecourt, at the point where the great tunnel trench was, with a support trench behind it, and the English



assaulted a curved trench north of that village known as the Bovis Trench. The 16th Division, composed of men from the South and West of Ireland, moved to the attack of the 2,000 yards line they had to take behind a screen of smoke and an artillery barrage. It was known that the tunnel trench was mined ready to be blown up when abandoned, and a party of



THE COUNTRY BETWEEN BULLECOURT AND CAMBRAI.

Royal Engineers went forward with the attack to discover the leads to the mines and cut the wires. Fortunately this was quickly done and the mines were rendered harmless. It was, as is easy to see, a work of considerable difficulty and great danger. The resistance of the German infantry was not, however, of a severe kind, probably owing to the fact that the defences were known to be mined. In such cases the soldiers are generally more intent on making certain of retreating before the explosion, to avoid the danger of being blown to pieces, than they are on making a strenuous resistance. They are apt to retire at an early period of the fighting, lest they should be sent sky high by a premature decision to make the electrical contact. The Irish having won the tunnel trench went on to assault the support trench a short distance in rear of it and measuring about half the length of the front line. They found this more difficult, as they came under a severe machine-gun fire, but after a smart struggle captured a considerable length of the trench, taking some 700 prisoners. Several counter-attacks were made by the Germans but without any success. The 3rd Division was equally successful

against the Bovis Trench, attacking with rifle, bomb and bayonet, and inflicting heavy losses on the enemy.

Altogether this attack was a very successful affair and very creditable to the troops who carried it out. Had our main Cambrai attack been successful the penetration of the two front German lines at Croisilles-Bullecourt would have been very valuable. For, coupled with the possession of Bourlon, the German lines between Quéant and Moeuvres would have been turned and must have been abandoned.

The southern diversion attack on the German lines in front of Epéhy, *i.e.*, by Vendhuile, some four miles south of the main attack, by South Lancashire troops also attained the desired result, the German line being captured for a short distance. But the object here was not to penetrate, but rather to attract troops which might have been used against the right flank of our main attack.

It was, of course, certain that the enemy would not quietly submit to the assaults we had so successfully made against him on the front of our main advance. On the left the 36th Division was heavily counter-attacked on the afternoon of the 20th and had to yield up the position it had won in the village of Moeuvres on its southern outskirts and retire to the Bapaume-Cambrai road. At other points along the line won, counter-attacks were also made. Here and there small successes were obtained by them, but nothing of material importance.

The outcome of the day's fighting was extremely good. The German three lines of defence on the west bank of the Canal de l'Escaut had been broken through over a considerable front, Marcoing to Masnières, while many important points, such as Havrincourt and Lateau Wood, had been taken, others as Flesquières, Anneux, Cantaing, Noyelles-sur-l'Escaut dominated. Over 5,000 prisoners had been taken. The result was not perhaps as great as might have been obtained had Flesquières village and Masnières bridge been secured, but was undoubtedly considerable for one day's work. To the tanks a great share of the credit was due, as they alone had made surprise possible, and to surprise was due the depth to which our forces penetrated. The Germans expected no such action, holding, as they did, the belief that an attack must be prefaced by the usual annihilating bombard-



ment. Writing in the *Berliner Tageblatt* of November 14 General von Ardenne, the well-known military critic of that paper, remarked : "When a very strong artillery fire suddenly begins at a relatively quiet spot it may be suggested with great probability that the English have selected a new point of attack." Ergo, if there was no such artillery preparation an attack was not to be suspected. There was none in this case, and therefore the Germans did not imagine that the sector over which our assault was delivered was in the least likely to be attacked. They were surprised, which accounts for the very little resistance met with in the first part of the battle, the advanced and main German lines being overrun with very small loss to our troops. This was, of course, very largely due to the good leading and courageous action of our tanks. It is curious when we note this, that in the opinion of von Ardenne "The tanks are practically played out. Our artillery has overcome them. They have lost their original power of spreading terror, and these shattered monsters are left lying to amuse our troops. It has been noticed that the English crews now leave their dangerous armoured prisons in good time. They

have evidently lost their taste for this game." These lucubrations form an excellent example of the kind of stuff which was constantly offered for the consumption of the German people, and which they eagerly swallowed. A German retreat is always in accordance with German plans. If the German Army were forced into the bottomless pit, it would doubtless be described as a new kind of victory for Germany. It may be remarked that at the time von Ardenne was throwing cold water on the tanks his own Government were engaged in copying them. It is true that when German tanks subsequently put in an appearance on the battlefield they turned out to be very clumsy and inefficient. But the value of this great military critic's views may be judged from his new views put forward a week later. "Those who fought in the battle describe the imposing impression made by the British tanks which preceded the attack on the widest front. As they advanced in masses with very small intervals between them they reminded one of Hannibal's battle elephants or the sickle chariots of the Pharaohs !" The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* describes the tank attack as formed of four main waves "of



[Official photograph.]

IRISH TROOPS IN GERMAN TRENCHES BEFORE CAMBRAI.



which the first consisted of half a tank brigade which fired incessantly as it rolled onward, tearing down everything in its way."

Another amusing German theory was enshrined in the *Vossische Zeitung* at the time of the Cambrai battle. Its military correspondent had the audacity to say: "Cambrai proved again that the British soldier cannot face the German bayonet. Where there was a man-to-man fight [which there was along the whole front] the British were repulsed." Yet the account which has been given of the fighting on November 20 shows that rarely did the German stop to get the bayonet, but ran off before the British soldier could stick it into him, and where our men came to handy-strokes, as at Bullecourt, Masnières, or with the 36th Division, our men soon got the better of their opponents.

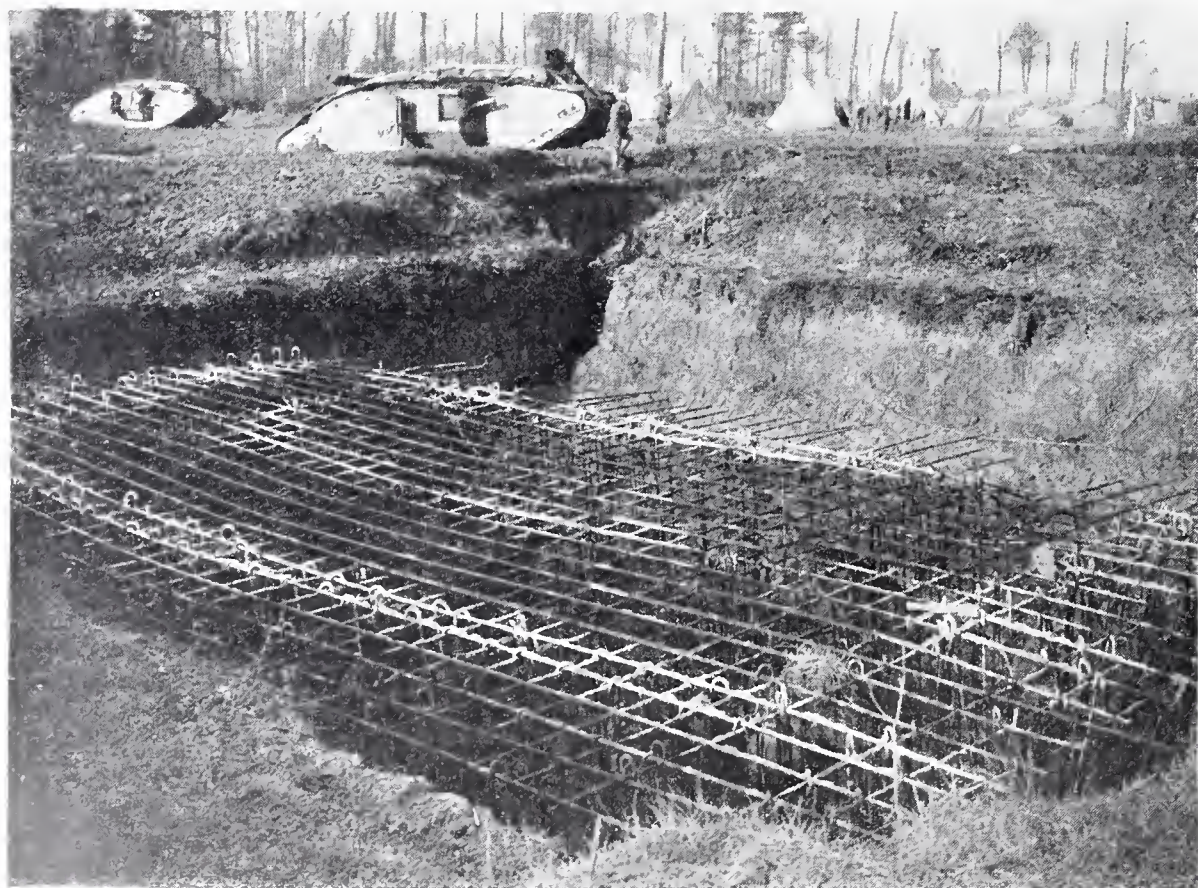
The German reports on the fighting of the 20th were very meagre with regard to what had actually taken place. After recording the increased fire from Houthulst Wood to Zandvoorde on the 19th and during the night to November 20, and destructive artillery fire\*

\* The Germans recognise four kinds of shell fire (besides gas-shell fire)—viz. (1) Disturbing, (2) destructive, (3) annihilating, (4) barrage.

near Poelcappelle and Passchendaele, the report went on to say: "The fighting activity revived also in Artois on both sides of the Scarpe, near Bullecourt and Quéant. Enemy reconnoitring detachments were repulsed in hand-to-hand fighting." The only allusion to the main Cambrai attack was: "In the region between the roads leading from Bapaume and Peronne towards Cambrai the English attacked with strong forces and gained ground. Our counter-measures are in full swing."

The work done by the airmen during the day under most trying conditions of weather had been very valuable. They were practically unopposed by German aeroplanes, and thus were able to act as auxiliaries to the advancing infantry, flying very low, bombing and using their machine-guns against the enemy. They also did some fine work against the German transport lines.

During the night of November 20-21 there was some fighting where the hostile lines were in immediate contact, but nothing of great importance occurred. The Germans had undoubtedly been dazed by the magnitude and weight of the British results and at first were puzzled what to do. But they by no means gave up the contest, and, indeed, made every



STEEL NETWORK FOR A FORT OF "REINFORCED CONCRETE" LEFT UNFINISHED BY THE GERMANS AT FLESQUIÈRES. [Official photograph.]



effort to hold on to what was still left them in the environs of Cambrai. Reserves and guns were hurried up from every possible quarter. Some of the Guard Corps were brought from Lens and others from all the neighbouring centres from which troops could be spared. From the Convalescent Dépôt at Beaufort every man who could stand was brought up, motor lorries being used for the purpose.

Early on November 21 our attack on Flesquières was resumed. The positions which had already been won the day before, now enabled the attack on the village to be conducted on much better lines. The direct attack was no longer necessary, and the assault was directed from the north-west, thus turning the rear defences, and by 8 o'clock the whole of Flesquières was in our hands. The possession of this village was of great importance to us. Coupled with Graincourt, taken the previous day, it commanded the valley leading south of the Bapaume road to Cambrai and also rendered possible a further advance in the direction of Anneux and Bourlon Wood. It was thus possible to have turned the west end of Bourlon Wood by an attack from the canal line, as the valley through which it went would have afforded a good assembly position for the assaulting troops. But to do this the capture of Moeuvres was absolutely necessary, and the capture of Inchy-en-Artois desirable. Neither of these conditions was fulfilled on the morning of the 21st, when Sir Douglas Haig determined to continue the attack. To attain his object therefore the wood was frontally attacked, fully on the south and partially on the west, while Fontaine-Notre-Dame was also to be captured, thus threatening its eastern flank. For this conjoint assault the 51st and 62nd Divisions, with a number of tanks and some squadrons from the 1st Cavalry Division, were told off. At 10.30 a.m. the troops went forward, the 62nd, accompanied by tanks, against the southern side and south-western corner of the wood.

It will be remembered that some infantry from this division and cavalry from the 1st Cavalry Division had forced a way into Anneux on the previous evening. These parties contrived to hang on during the night, and when the 62nd Division advanced the next morning the capture of the whole village was soon accomplished. The division, having tanks and cavalry with it, then marched against Cantaing,

which was taken early in the afternoon, a considerable number of prisoners being rounded up there. The victorious troops then continued the movement against Bourlon Wood. But here the resistance was much more determined. The defences were strong and machine-guns were in great numbers. The fire from these brought the attack to a standstill. This is hardly to be wondered at, as the division had been fighting hard all the 20th and had had but



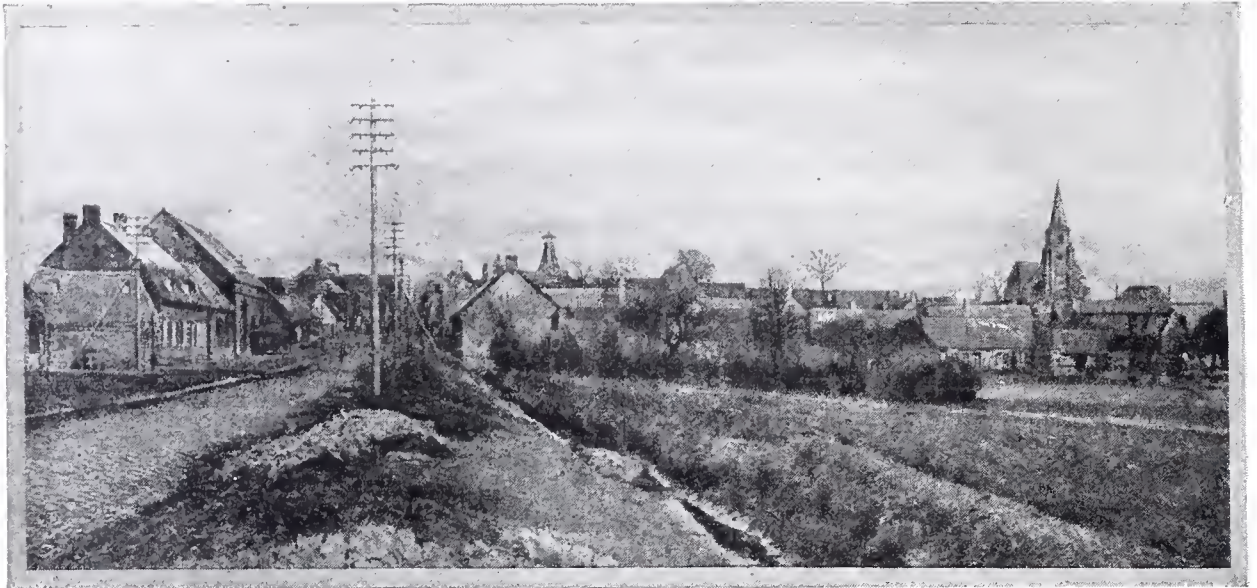
[Official photograph.]

#### A BABY RESCUED AT MASNIÈRES.

little time to recuperate and the position it now had to deal with was a very difficult one. Still some little progress was made and the outer fringe of the wood was occupied. The tanks contrived to penetrate a little way into it, though they were unable to stop there. Practically, therefore, no great stride was made towards conquering this important tactical point.

The 51st Division was more fortunate. With its allotment of tanks it assaulted Fontaine-Notre-Dame, and late in the afternoon our men drove the Germans out of the village and established themselves in their place. Its occupation blocked the road from Cambrai to Bapaume and held the tramway running back along it to Cambrai, and also the railway which went on thence to Marquion.





FONTAINE-NOTRE-DAME.

On the left of the 62nd Division the 36th Division pushed on from the ground they had held during the night on the Bapaume-Cambrai road against Mœuvres. But they were not able to penetrate beyond its southern edge. In the centre of our advance part of the 29th Division, reinforced by dismounted detachments of the 1st and 5th Cavalry Divisions, took up positions round Noyelles-sur-l'Escaut. This had been occupied on the evening of the previous day by patrols from the 6th Division and some cavalry. It was an important point on the flank of the British which it was of vital importance to hold against any German attack, since, if the enemy succeeded in occupying it in force, he would have threatened the line we held from Cantaing to Anneux. Hence the direction of a portion of the 29th Division to support the men of the 6th Division already

there. Severe fighting took place all day at Noyelles; assault after assault was made by the Germans, who were just as cognizant of its value from their point of view—viz., as a supporting point for troops acting against the right flank of our troops—as we were of its value for guarding the troops in question from such an attack. Fortunately all the German attempts were beaten off.

On our right we were more successful. Masnières had been, as has already been seen, completely occupied by the evening of the 20th. At 11 a.m. on the 21st the British infantry were sent across the canal and river near Masnières, and attacked the Hindenburg Reserve Line on the low hill-range facing it. Our men succeeded in entering the German line after some smart fighting, and established themselves along a part of the defences to the



ULSTER PIONEERS FILLING IN A GERMAN TRENCH.

[Official photograph.]



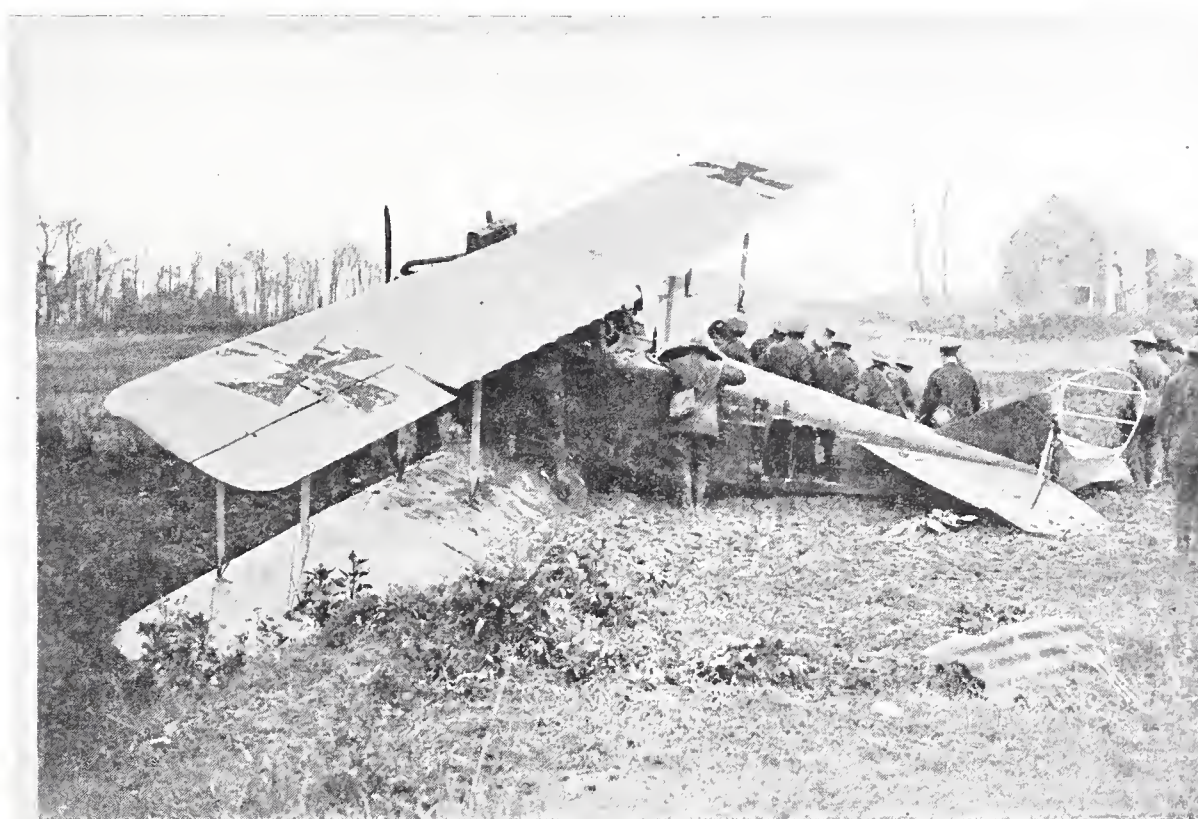
north and towards the east to a point about half-way between Masnières and Crèvecœur. But Rumilly was still in the enemy's hands, and blocked all advance towards Marcoing. A strong counter-attack from it against the left of our advance was pushed back with loss, but our men had to be content with the line won.

It will be remembered that on the first day of the battle the 20th Division had stormed La Vacquerie and the German defences on Welsh Ridge, and that Lateau Wood had been taken after a severe struggle by the 12th Division. From these two units troops also advanced at 11 a.m., their efforts being directed

a heavy counter-attack drove our infantry out of it and back to the high ground behind, where it had been since the previous evening.

On the Bullecourt-Croisilles front the enemy executed five counter-attacks, but made no impression on the line we had taken.

During the evening of November 21 Sir Julian Byng issued orders for the Third Army to consolidate the positions won and to capture Rumilly the next day. But on second thoughts, later on in the night, it was deemed advisable to cancel the order with regard to Rumilly and to limit the work of the troops to making good the ground won.



[Official photograph.]

#### A GERMAN AEROPLANE BROUGHT DOWN ON THE CAMBRAI FRONT.

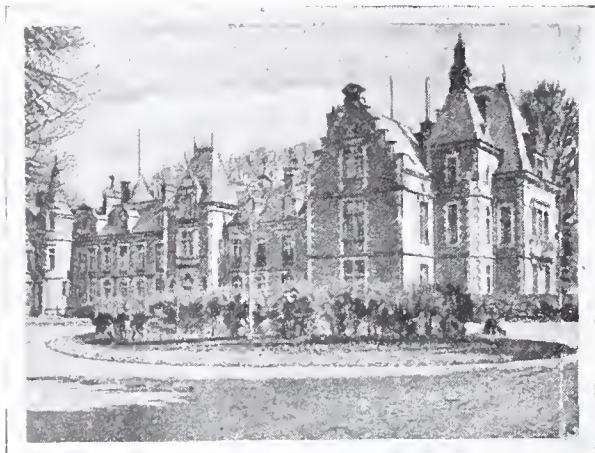
against the elbow of the canal and river at Crèvecœur. The village of Les Rues-des-Vignes was soon taken by the 12th Division, and some progress made towards Crèvecœur by the 20th Division. But in this direction the ground was very difficult. The bank on the far side had considerable command over the bed of the river and canal, and the German trenches here bristled with machine-guns. A passage over the canal was effected in the course of the afternoon, but all attempts to cross the river itself were stopped by the heavy machine-gun fire. Nor were we more successful on the extreme right, for shortly after Les Rues-des-Vignes fell to our arms, and before there had been time to consolidate its defences,

It is quite plain that men who had been fighting hard for 48 hours with but a very limited period for sleep must have been very tired, not to say worn-out.

The strain of battle, which rarely receives notice either in dispatches or in the reports of correspondents, is nevertheless a very important and pressing factor which has to be taken into consideration by the leaders in deciding when, and to what extent, troops can be called on for fresh exertions, as it diminishes so much their vital energies. It was winter-time, rain had fallen almost incessantly for 36 hours, and the men were soaked to their skins. It was therefore a very prudent resolution come to that, for the next day, the

improvement for defence of the ground won should be the sole task of the soldiers.

The new line held by the Third Army commenced at Gonnellieu from the old line and went along the Bonavis Ridge to the east of Lateau Wood, turned round with the curve of the Canal-de-l'Escaut, and, crossing the latter and the river at a point about half-way between Masnières and Crèveceur, moved up on to the Hindenburg Reserve Line on the height above this point, part of which we held. It then



BOURLON CHÂTEAU.

went on past Marcoing, Noyelles and Cantaing to Fontaine-Notre-Dame. Round this village it bent sharply back, and then through the southern edge of Bourslon Wood in an almost straight line by Graincourt, across the southern end of the spur to the west of the wood, down to the Canal du Nord, and then linked on to our original line south of Tadpole Copse. It will be seen by the reader who traces this line on the map that, although the ground captured represented considerable depth and was noteworthy so far as the area was a measure of the success of the operation, as a matter of fact the position held was by no means satisfactory. If the British were to stop where they were it would be necessary to capture Bourslon Wood and village and take the Hindenburg Reserve Line back to Bullecourt. For the moment the exposed position of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, which could be attacked almost all round, was especially weak, and the line back from it to Noyelles-sur-l'Escaut by no means strong. Moreover, on the right bank the position was not satisfactory. Here our troops were in a very pronounced salient, the right flank of which, running back along the eastern bank of the St. Quentin Canal and roughly a mile and a half from it to a point south of Gonnellieu, was extremely liable to

attack. We had no command over the passages of the canal, which were covered from us by the western slopes of the valley along which it was constructed.

Sir Douglas Haig felt, therefore, that to stand still was impossible; unless Bourslon Ridge were captured it would be necessary to withdraw to the Flesquières Ridge. Now we have seen that the Bourslon position was as necessary to the Germans as to us. It therefore became a nice question whether the success we had gained would have impressed the enemy sufficiently to incline him to retire from the line he held. If so a further advance was desirable, because the possession of the Bourslon Ridge would have given us complete command of view over the ground down to the Sensée. "The enemy's defensive lines south of the Scarpe and Sensée Rivers would thereby be turned, his communications exposed to the observed fire of our artillery, and his positions in this sector jeopardized. In short, so great was the importance of the ridge to the enemy that its loss would probably cause the abandonment by the Germans of their carefully prepared defence systems for a considerable distance to the north of it."

Now it may be observed that to compel "the abandonment by the Germans" of their defence line back to the Scarpe it would plainly be more economical of force to penetrate it about the salient of Quéant-Bullecourt. If this could have been done combined with an advance from Mœuvres behind their trenches leading to Quéant, then undoubtedly a result would have been obtained at least as great as when Hindenburg made his celebrated retreat which was to produce such wonderful results for the Germans, but did not. The only question to be asked was—had the British Commander-in-Chief sufficient force available for the purpose? To put it mildly this seems very doubtful. At the northern extremity of our line—*i.e.*, round Ypres—although we had been successful in the fighting, we had obtained nothing more than a decent position to hold on to for the winter. Any advance from it in a really decisive direction—*i.e.*, on Staden or Roulers—was absolutely impossible at this period of the year. Had the July offensive been successful, undoubtedly the whole of the German forces between our line of advance and the sea would have been in a great peril. But it was not, and Sir Douglas Haig seems to have felt this shut him out from



any further attempt in this direction. The main reason for his determination is plainly to be found in his statement that : "An additional and very important argument in favour of proceeding with my attack was supplied by the situation in Italy, upon which a continuance of pressure on the Cambrai front might reasonably be expected to exercise an important effect, no matter what measure of success attended my efforts." As to the Cambrai position itself, the situation was as follows.

The marching and fighting had placed a very severe strain on the troops engaged. It had been necessary to call a lull in the advance on the 22nd to allow the troops some rest, to consolidate our position and to bring up guns and ammunition, and to organize our communication line up to the position now held. This delay, although unavoidable, was, of course, disadvantageous, because it gave the enemy time to bring up reinforcements, which Sir Douglas Haig had from the first expected would be the case after 48 hours. But he did not think for the moment these could do more than replace losses. On the other hand it must be remembered that, in his own words, 'the right of our advance had definitely been

stayed." The Third Army had been, however, strengthened by the addition of two divisions previously told off to go to Italy, and there was a strong French force, including infantry and cavalry, still at his disposal. However, the latter must not be regarded as any addition of strength to the Third Army, because, although on November 20 some portion of them was put in motion, the course of events did not afford occasion to employ them. Why this was the case we are not told. But they were held in readiness within easy reach so long as it appeared possible they might be of service.

The Third Army was, therefore, left to its own resources, and it was determined to attack and take Bournon Wood, the *sine qua non* for any advance north and north-westward, which was what might be described as the ultimate object of the operation, partly diversion for the sake of the Italians, partly offensive for the possibilities it offered of very decisive results against the German lines south of Arras. With regard to the latter it was at any rate judged possible, assuming that the additions which had come and were coming up to join the Germans would not prevent the capture of the Bournon position, and the possibilities this opened up for the destruction of the German



Official photograph.

A ROADSIDE SCENE.

salient round from Croisilles to Mœuvres were great.

November 22 was therefore spent in preparations for the advance. These included consolidating our newly won positions, carrying out certain reliefs, and giving some rest to other units. The day, therefore, was comparatively free of incident. The Germans,



[Bassano.]

**GENERAL SIR JULIAN BYNG,**  
Commanded the British Forces in the offensive  
on the Cambrai front.

however, recaptured Fontaine-Notre-Dame, but this was a post that must necessarily have fallen into our hands again if we could hold on to Cantaing and capture Bournon Wood. To the latter aim, therefore, our next movements were chiefly to be directed. But the intention to move westwards for the reasons we have set out was always borne in mind, and during the night of the 22nd-23rd the London Scottish captured Tadpole Copse, an important point west of Mœuvres, which would not only aid the complete capture of this village but also be one stage more forward on the road to Quéant.

The result of the opening part of the Cambrai battle was received with great enthusiasm, not only in England and Scotland but also in the Dominions beyond the Seas and among our Allies. In London on November 24, for the first time since the declaration of peace after the South African War, the bells of St. Paul's

rang out a peal to celebrate the victory, and the multitude assembled before the Cathedral united in singing "God Save the King!" There had been time since the first news of the success had reached this country to organize the celebration throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain, and, from Land's End to John o' Groat's, cathedral and church joined with their bells in expressing the joy of the people at the news. Sir Julian Byng was promoted to General.\*

In the meanwhile since November 20 there had been other successes gained by the Allies on the Western Front. On the 21st the French had gained an important local success at Juvincourt, near Craonne, taking over 400 prisoners. The next day our troops near Zandvoorde, to the south-east of Ypres, seized some ground from the Germans, while hostile raids north-west of Pontruet, north-west of St. Quentin, and south of Neuve-Chapelle were driven back and some prisoners captured. At Juvincourt the efforts of the enemy to regain the ground taken by the French were defeated with heavy loss.

It may be interesting to give the gist of the German reports on the fighting. The first notice of it has already been alluded to on p. 419. The account of the struggle for the 21st contains rather more details.

The battle south-west of Cambrai continues. By the massed use of tanks and infantry, and by the launching of his cavalry, the enemy sought to effect the "break-through," which was denied him on the first days of attack. He did not succeed in his objective. Although he was able to gain a little ground beyond our front lines, he was not able to attain greater successes. Enemy troops, which were effectively caught by the fire of our artillery and machine-guns and greatly thinned, encountered the counter-thrust of our brave infantry.

On the western bank of the Scheldt they drove the enemy back on to Annenx and Fontaine, and on the eastern bank into his departure positions south of Rumilly.

Before and behind our line, distributed over the whole battlefield, lies the wreckage of tanks which have been shot to pieces. Our airmen and motor-guns also took a prominent part in their destruction.

At nightfall the fighting activity on the battlefield diminished. South of Vendhuile the enemy did not repeat his attacks.

EVENING.—To the south-west of Cambrai fresh English attacks, delivered after strong artillery preparation, failed.

All this only needs to be compared with the actual facts to estimate its real value.

The weather, which had broken on the 20th, continued to be very bad on the Cambrai front, and any distant observation was impossible

\* He had previously only had the acting rank.



to our aviators, as they could only fly at very low elevations. But still the clouds allowed a good deal of useful work to be done, for they hid our machines in their advance against hostile troops and transport bringing up supplies and ammunition along the roads to Cambrai, which were liberally peppered with bombs and machine-gun fire. Such operations at low elevations are of course more dangerous than when carried out at a good height, and five of our machines were returned as missing in the evening. But the casualties among those of the Germans engaged by our men were also considerable. Three of their low-flying aeroplanes went crashing down, two were forced down out of control, and in addition an observation balloon was set on fire and fell in flames.

November 23 witnessed the commencement of the further advance which the British Commander-in-Chief had determined to undertake to establish his position on the left flank in such a manner as would enable him to undertake further operations on the German line stretching out to Quéant and beyond, while his defensive flank by Cambrai held the Germans off from threatening the flank and rear of this movement.

The attack began under the cover of a very severe fire from the assembled British batteries. These had been considerably increased in numbers by additional guns just brought up and by some of the captured German guns, for which a considerable amount of ammunition had also fallen into our hands. Fontaine-Notre-Dame and the Bournon Wood were simultaneously attacked at 10.30 a.m., the former by the 51st Division, the second by the 40th Division, which now entered the battle line for the first time at Cambrai. Both were accompanied by tanks.

The 51st Division was unable to force a way into the village and held off for a time, but early in the afternoon made another attempt. On this occasion a number of tanks managed to enter the village, and remained there till dusk, when they returned to their own line. They had meanwhile inflicted considerable loss on the Germans. But on the whole our troops made but little progress on this part of the front, and the village still remained in the power of the enemy.

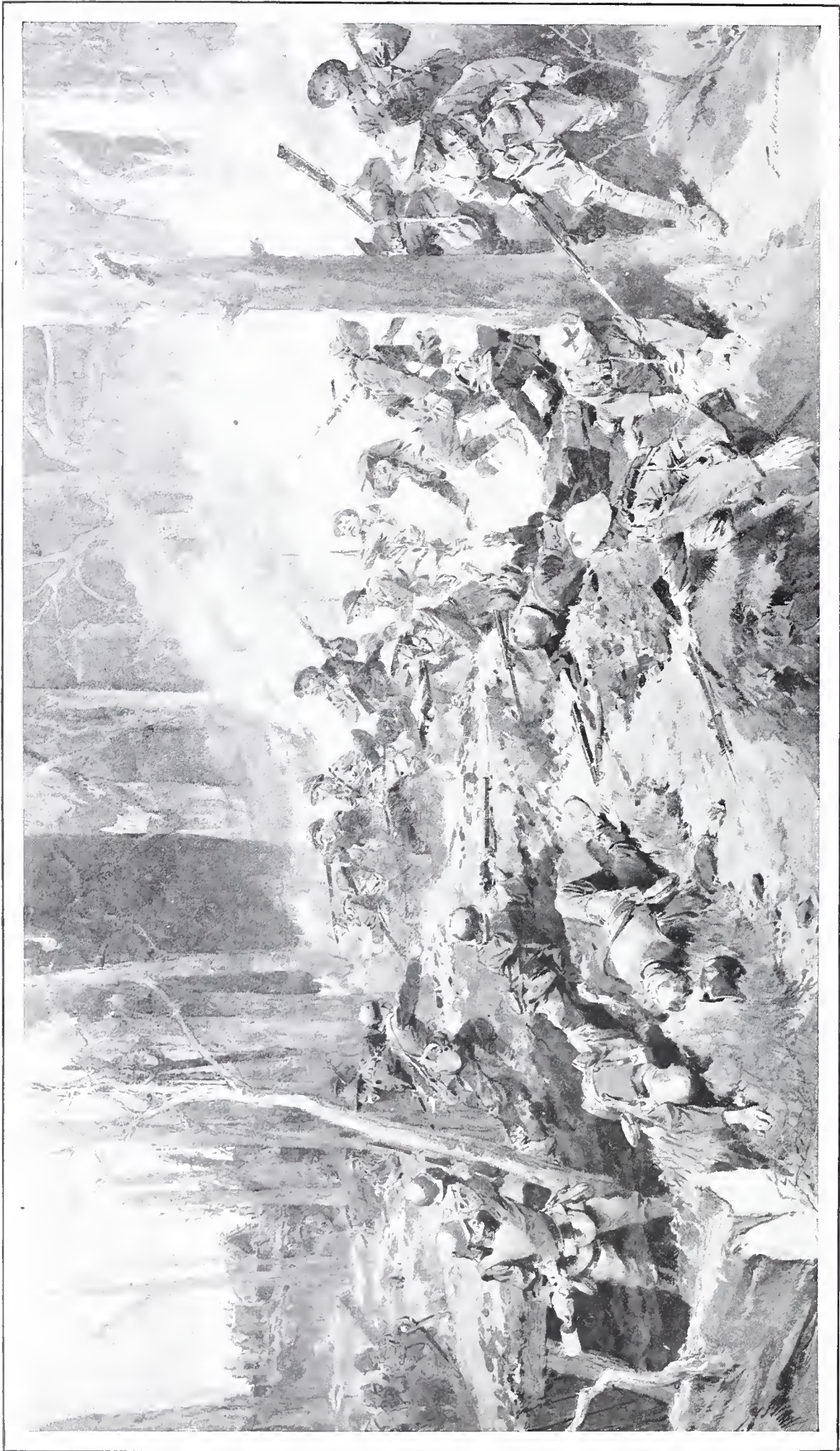
The 40th Division was at first more fortunate. Directed against Bournon Wood, it encountered considerable resistance. But the southern edge trenches were taken and the Germans forced back along the many drives which



A DISABLED TANK AS OBSERVATION POST.

[Official photograph n.]





BRITISH DISMOUNTED CAVALRY HOLDING BOURLON WOOD.



traversed the wood, and eventually, after about five hours' fighting, with the help of such tanks as had been able to penetrate, they were thrust out of it into the village, the trenches on the west and south sides being also taken. Our infantry followed up, and managed to enter the outer fringe of Bourlon, but could not take it entirely, and were obliged under the stress of repeated counter-attacks to fall back to the wood. Here again the enemy attacked in considerable force with the three battalions of the 9th Grenadier Regiment, but was driven off with loss.

On the extreme left of our line, the 36th Division, now reinforced by the 56th (London) Division, was engaged in severe hand-to-hand engagements with the German troops at Mœuvres and Tadpole Copse. The importance of the former, situated as it was at the point of the salient of the German defences where they turned off west towards Quéant, is evident. Once we had it in our hands we should have been in an excellent position for a westward movement on their rear. The fighting was of the closest character, in which the bayonet constantly came into play, and by the end of the day we had here made some further progress. The weather had improved and the sky was clearer. The German airmen took heart of grace, and once more appeared on the scene in considerable numbers. Some lively aerial combats took place, in which each side could claim five successes.

The next day the Bourlon Wood fighting was resumed. The Germans had by this time very considerably increased the number of their infantry, and accumulated a large number of guns. During the morning our men were twice attacked. The first assault was driven off with heavy loss, yet again the enemy came on. Our troops fought with great ardour, but numbers were against them, and they were slowly pushed back from the north-eastern corner of the wood. But the German success was a short-lived one. A counter-attack delivered by the 14th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, with the dismounted men of the 15th Hussars and the remnants of the 119th Infantry Brigade, struck back with such vigour that the enemy retreated before them, and at noon we once more occupied the border of the wood and the entrances to the village. So far for the wood itself.

On the western side, on the high ground outside the wood, there had been a lively

combat between the Germans endeavouring to counter-attack in this direction and the dismounted cavalry holding this part of the ground we had captured. There was now a little pause in the battle, during which the enemy assembled his troops for another assault on Bourlon Wood. This was not pushed with so much vigour as before, and was stopped by our artillery and rifle fire before it reached the position we held. It was now our turn to reply. In the afternoon a combined attack of infantry, dismounted cavalry and tanks on Bourlon village forced their way from front to back, and thus the whole of it was in our hands, although here and there small parties of the enemy still held out. But the fighting was not yet over for the day. In the evening a fourth and most determined attack was made on the wood. In the semi-darkness very severe fighting took place, but eventually we got the upper hand and the enemy ceased his efforts for the night, our troops resting on the ground they had won.

There had also been a hard struggle to the west of Mœuvres for the possession of the Hindenburg Line there. But the Germans clung to it with great tenacity, knowing the necessity of not letting our men in behind it, and the actual progress we made was very small.

The early part of November 25 passed without incident of importance on the Bourlon Wood part of the front. In the evening a German attack in heavy force won back Bourlon village, our men being considerably outnumbered. But a party of the 13th East Surreys held out in their position at the south-east corner of the village with the greatest courage and tenacity till they were relieved on the 27th.

The continuous and severe fighting in which the 40th Division had been engaged for the last three days without a break had greatly reduced its strength, and it was therefore thought better to withdraw it.

The left of our line advanced towards Mœuvres at 8.30 a.m., and appear to have occupied this village and even to have pushed on a party towards Pronville. Meanwhile our airmen reported that a counter-attack, about two battalions strong, were advancing against our troops in Mœuvres. It was brought to a standstill by our artillery fire.

The next day the Germans again attacked Bourlon Wood, and pushed our infantry back



[Official photograph.]

#### A CORNER OF THE BATTLEFIELD AND A DERELICT TANK.

a short distance from the northern edge of the wood. The position here was by no means satisfactory. Despite all our efforts we had been unable to retain complete hold of the wood, and our tenure of the village had been even more uncertain. Nor had we made any progress to speak of on the west side of it, while Fontaine-Notre-Dame was still in the hands of the Germans, as was the La Folie Wood. Moreover, from the high ground on Bourlon Hill they had a good command of view over the ground south of the wood, and could thus overlook our movements there. It was therefore decided to make a further attempt on November 27 to obtain complete possession of Bourlon village and wood, the ground to west of the latter, as well as Fontaine-Notre-Dame and the high ground behind it.

During the day, although the clouds were low and the wind was strong, our airmen contrived to do some good work. They helped our artillery by observing their fire, and took many photographs of the ground. With great daring, flying quite low down, they dropped bombs on collections of German troops and transport, and brought some of them under machine-gun fire. They also dealt with more distant objects. The bridges

over the Sensée and the railheads near Cambrai and north of Douai were bombed, Douai and Souain stations were also attacked. Altogether three tons of bombs were dropped. Some engagements also took place with the enemy's aeroplanes, in which five were accounted for, and another was brought down by our anti-aircraft guns. All our machines came back in safety.

For the 27th the Guards were given the task of capturing Fontaine-Notre-Dame, while the 62nd Division returned to the attack of Bourlon village. The former troops comprised battalions of the Grenadier, Coldstream, Scots and Irish Guards, and they moved forward to attack before daylight at 6.30 a.m. Immediately after they started the enemy sent down a strong barrage, but too far back to affect the movement. There was but little fire at first actually directed against them, but when they got nearer to the village they were met in front by a heavy machine-gun and rifle fire from it, while from La Folie Copse a flanking fire came. But the village was reached, which saved them from the latter, and then the Guardsmen set to work to clear out all opposition; it was a question of house-to-house fighting, while from innumerable loopholes bullets were rained on our men. But



surely, if slowly, they won their way onward, and, as is usually the case, as they began to get the better of their opponents the latter showed a tendency to yield, preferring prison to the bayonet. By about 11 o'clock the village was practically in our hands. But the Germans had meanwhile, when they gauged the progress of the assault, been preparing a weighty counter-stroke. Two fresh infantry divisions had been brought up, and these were hurled at the village. They outnumbered our men by two to one, they were fresh, ours were tired, and under the pressure of numbers the latter were slowly forced back, fighting hard the whole way, and taking some hundreds of prisoners with them. Thus again was Fontaine - Notre - Dame won and lost.

Meanwhile the 62nd Division had been fighting hard at Bournonville, into which they had forced their way once more, relieving the men of the East Surrey Regiment who had been cut off on the 25th. The tanks were of the greatest assistance in the assault, and greatly contributed to its success. But here also a counter-attack in force deprived us of the fruits of the advance, and at the end of the day the situation was practically unchanged.

West of Mœuvres the enemy attacked the position the 16th Division had won in the Hindenburg line, but was completely driven off by our fire, and our troops following on gained a little more ground. On our right the 12th Division had improved the position opposite Banteux.

Throughout the battle the work of organizing our defences and completing the communications had gone on continuously and energetically. The Germans had evidently made up their minds that they would be left in undisturbed possession of the Cambrai sector during the winter, and they had accumulated large supplies of material for the construction of roads and dug-outs there. A great quantity of this fell into our hands and proved of great utility, saving us the labour of bringing it up for ourselves.

The fighting on the 27th marked the termination of the first phase of the Battle of Cambrai. It would be idle to contend that it had been a complete success, for beyond pushing back the German line, inflicting losses in men and material, and attracting reinforcements which might otherwise have been employed against Italy, there was nothing to show for the fighting. The German view of the matter



A TANK IN A VILLAGE STREET.

[Official photograph.]

was indicated in the following extracts from their papers of November 22 :

The *Kölnische Volkszeitung's* Berlin correspondent, according to a Cologne telegram, says that, apart from their first success, the British attained nothing, although an enormous number of tanks were employed and many infantry were thrown on the German positions. The battle picture is the same as that of all the great efforts at penetration on the Western front. The enemy proceeds without heeding his losses in men and material, and only reaches an initial success by which on the German side some material is lost, but the expected break-through is not attained. The British have only partly broken through into the German front, the whole British victory being nothing but a local success. The attack was executed, perhaps, precisely on that terrain because of the possibility which existed there of supporting it by a great number of tanks.

The behaviour of the troops in the first hours of this frightful attack was admirable. They maintained their positions stubbornly, so that the British were unable to extend their irruption into our front.

This British local success and the gain of ground which it achieved amount only to 166th part of all that our troops have won in Italy alone in the last few weeks : moreover, on the Western front what was involved was only a bit of country completely destroyed by years of war. Meanwhile the Battle of Cambrai continues. The enemy will indeed say that he has gained a great victory. He may say that so far as we are concerned, but no reason whatever exists for us to be in the least anxious, for both the front and the troops will show their best force against the British.

The *Frankfurter Zeitung* describes Cambrai as an "incident." A break into the German positions succeeded, but the operative exploitation of an incontestable tactical success did not occur, and is not to be feared. The strategical fortune of the Germans is not bound to the possession of villages or trenches which have been lost. All the same, it is regrettable that they no longer possess their carefully built-up bases.

The British, the journal goes on, do not announce the main thing—namely, that they ought to have achieved a more propitious break through at least to the traffic centre of Cambrai. The result of their effort is that their centre has pushed itself forward a few kilometres, while the flanks remained behind. The operations in France will have no influence on events in Italy, and not even any influence on other parts of the Western front.

This comment is of course exaggerated in tone, but it must be admitted that the view taken of the value of the British successes was really not very far wrong. We had been unable to push home as we had hoped, and therefore the results can only be regarded as local without far-reaching import. The main reason for this was the fact that our available force was too small. As Sir Douglas Haig plainly stated in his dispatch of February 20, "only part of the losses . . . had been replaced, and many recently arrived drafts, still far from being fully trained, were included in the ranks of the armies." While the Germans had been able to draw considerable forces from their armies on the Russian front, we had no such reserve available. On the contrary, we had been forced by the disaster in Italy to send thither troops we could ill spare—in fact, could not spare at all, if the Cambrai offensive was to be made a real success.\* For this the British Commander-in-Chief was in no wise to blame. It was unfortunate because it marred what might have been a very important stroke. But to the troops who carried on under trying circumstances with great and insistent bravery for five days of constant fighting, during which they had taken 10,500 prisoners, 142 guns, 350 machine guns, and 7 trench mortars, besides large amounts of ammunition and other warlike stores, great praise was undoubtedly due.

\* To the question why the French troops available were not employed, no answer is given in the dispatch of February 25, 1918, as published on March 4.





## CHAPTER CCXLVII.

# EQUATORIAL AFRICA DURING THE WAR.

THE GERMAN POSSESSIONS AND THEIR BRITISH NEIGHBOURS—DISAPPOINTED GERMAN HOPES OF REBELLION—NIGERIA—LOYAL COOPERATION—A “MARINE CONTINGENT”—FINANCE—GOLD COAST—SIERRA LEONE—GAMBIA—ASHANTI—THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES—THE OCCUPATION OF TOGOLAND—BRITISH EAST AFRICA, UGANDA, AND NYASALAND—ZANZIBAR AND SOMALILAND.

ON the day after war was declared in Europe Africa awoke with four separate and distinct campaigns already commenced within its coasts, and almost the first piece of war news which reached the expectant British public at home concerned the successful invasion of Togoland. Until then the British public in general had lived in comfortable ignorance that there was such a place as Togoland\*; but the knowledge that it had been summarily invaded and its wireless station destroyed was more than comfortable.

But Togoland was only the least of the four protectorates which Germany possessed in Africa, and she had planned their extension until a belt of German territory should unite the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, and give her a dominating position in the continent. In their position side by side and in their relative proportions, the adjoining British and German territories

of Nigeria and German Cameroon reproduced on a larger scale the conditions governing the struggle between the Gold Coast and Togoland.\* But at the outbreak of war Nigeria, fully occupied in a fundamental change of administration, was taken unawares, and the first thoughts of the Government had to be given to measures for defending the protectorate against expected German attack. The day of danger soon passed, however; and the next act in the local drama of war was the invasion of German Cameroon by an expeditionary force from Nigeria. The Cameroons campaign having been successfully concluded by the joint efforts of British and French West African forces, the third act opened with the embarkation of another strong expeditionary force from Nigeria to assist in the distant war then being furiously waged on the other side of Africa, where British and German East

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\* Even four years later, on July 19, 1918, in an important case heard in London, the following conversation occurred between the Judge and a witness—an ex-Postmaster General—who deposed to alleged greetings from Togoland received in Berlin by wireless telegraphy:—

The Judge: Who sent the greetings, the King?—Very likely.

His lordship asked: Where is Togoland?

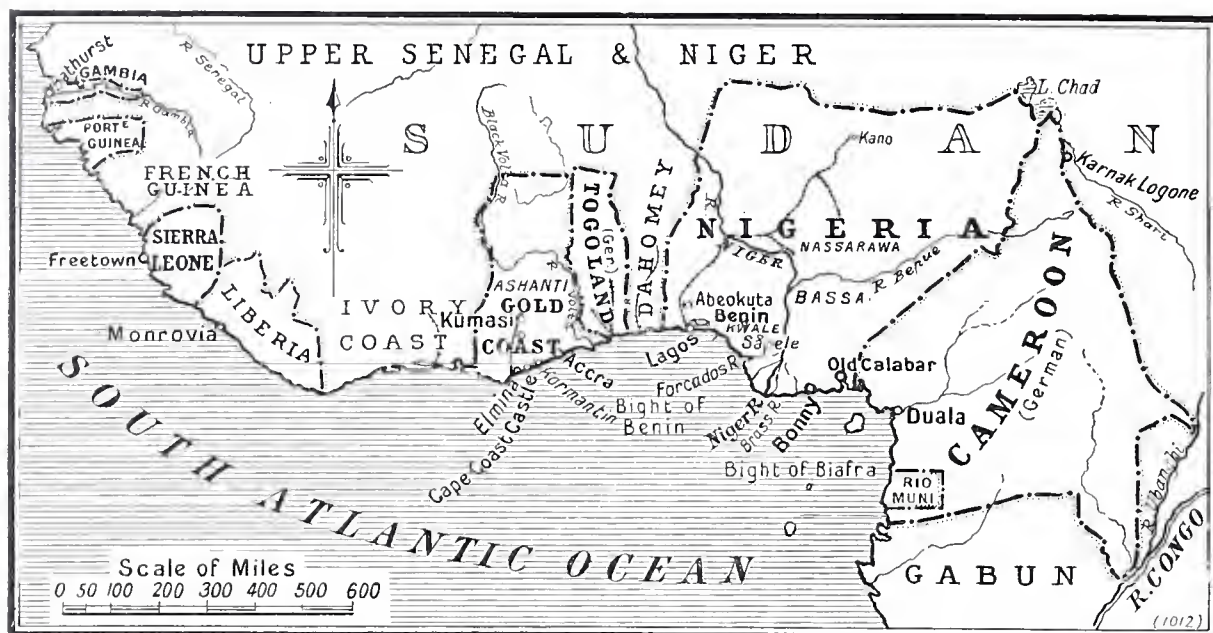
The Witness: It is one of those places we have recently acquired.

The Judge: Cheap?

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\* As in the case of Togoland, which was bordered east by the French colony of Dahomey (which gave help in reducing Togoland), so in the Cameroons the Germans had French as well as British neighbours. French Equatorial Africa bounded the Cameroons on the east and south, and the first invasion of German Cameroon was from French territory. What is said in the text as to the internal condition of the British Colonies applies equally to the French colonies in West and Central Africa. The justness of French rule secured the unswerving allegiance of the natives, and so secure was France's position that she was able to send thousands of West African troops—as well as troops from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco—to the European front.



MAP OF WESTERN AFRICA.

African territories made a third pair of well-matched combatants. The Germans may well have conceived that no better opening for disruptive forces could have been found than in Nigeria, where the great Moslem Emirs of the northern provinces might strike for freedom from British control at the moment when the administration was being changed and a powerful enemy was hammering at the gate. Nor had enemy agents, the German traders in Nigeria, neglected their usual propaganda. Germany would be easily victorious in Europe, the natives were told, and in a few months the English would be driven from Africa. But the Moslem Emirs stood splendidly solid in their loyalty to the British Government ;

and although some local unrest was caused among the pagan natives in the coast districts, those who inhabited the regions contiguous to the German frontier threw themselves heart and soul into the work of defence. They had not lived next door to the Germans for years without learning the difference between a system of government which aims to benefit the ruled and that which considers only the advantage of the rulers. In the moment of shock it was a loyal and morally united country which uprose against the disturbers of the world's peace, and in its successive stages of effort and the hard work achieved by Nigeria's far-flung forces in German East Africa we saw a surer omen than in the quick success in Togoland.



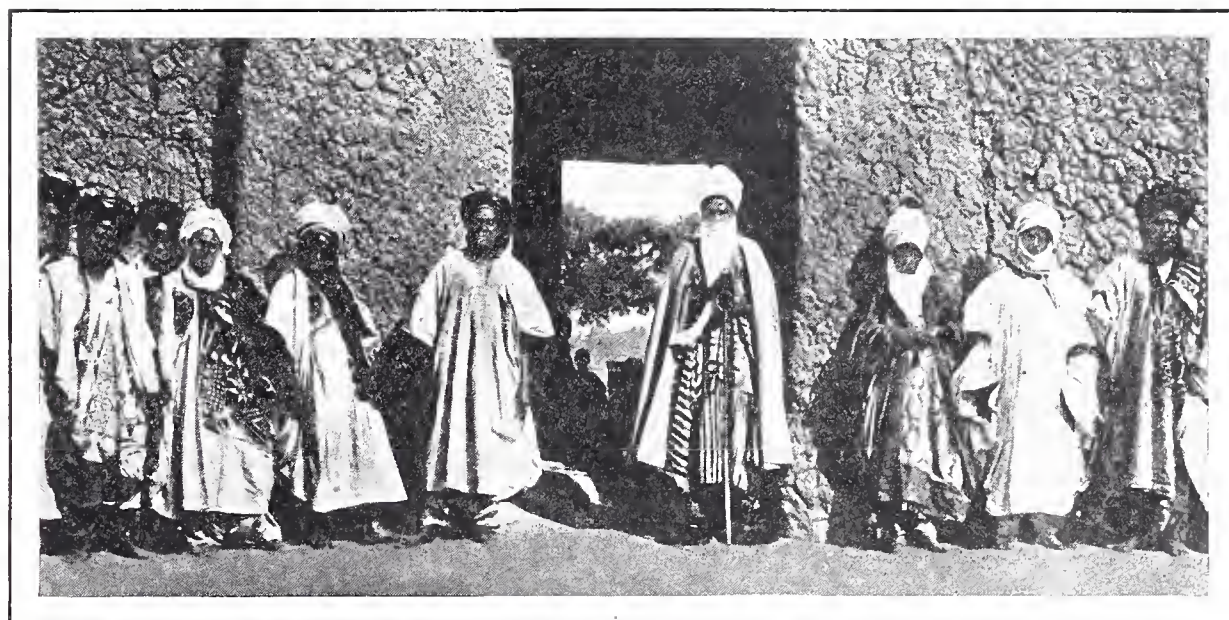
LOME, THE PRINCIPAL TOWN AND PORT OF TOGOLAND.



The same moral leaped naturally to the mind in viewing the campaigns waged so indomitably for the British cause by South Africa against the Germans in South-West Africa on one side and in East Africa on the other, as well as against the disruptive racial forces cunningly set in motion in its midst by Teuton agency playing upon the national feeling of the Boers.

But the narratives of all these campaigns belong to the accounts of military operations which are fully detailed elsewhere. The subject of this chapter is the reverse of the

colonies or protectorates was able and willing to respond to the Empire's need, and to accept this as a type and pattern by which to judge and measure the similar efforts made by other colonies in the Dark Continent. Premising that any comparison which may be made between one colony and another must be modified by so many allowances for difference in local conditions as to have no invidious exactitude whatever, Nigeria, which has been already mentioned, may be selected for the purpose although at the time when the war broke out it may have precisely resembled no other



THE EMIR OF KANO AND HIS COUNCIL.

This potentate contributed £10,000 a year towards the expenses of the war.

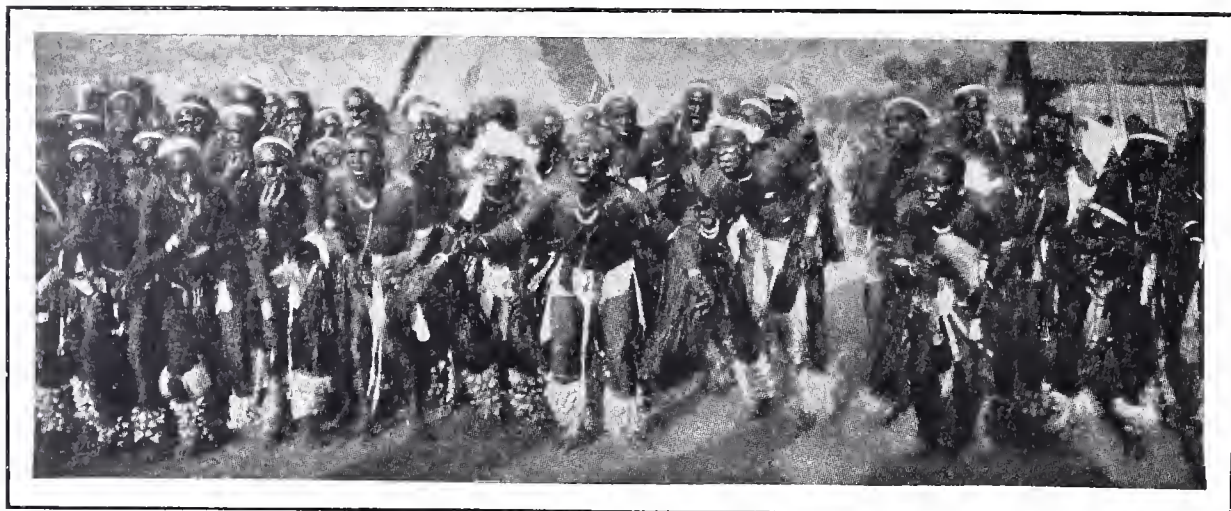
shield, being concerned less with the front which it presented to the enemy than the rouseles by which it was upheld. The services rendered by native carriers from a single Protectorate in Africa naturally occupy but a very small space in the story of a world-wide war with its millions of civilized European combatants; yet when 150,000 natives, one-half of the total male population suitable for the work, enlisted and were employed from the British East African Protectorate, there must have been something that is as well worth telling as any tale of battles, of what that effort meant to the colony, what it meant to the British Empire, and what it meant to the final result of the war, the instinctive rebellion of mankind against the evil forces which threatened to enslave it.

Such being the worthy theme of these few pages, it will perhaps be elucidated best by consideration of the circumstances in which and the extent to which any one of the African

part of the British possessions in Equatorial Africa. This, however, would be equally true of every other colony or protectorate. Under the constantly increasing stimulus of British influence, beginning in the enterprise of the explorer and trader, and ending in the beneficent control of Whitehall, each had been able to follow the lines of its own natural development, only restrained within limits so wide as to minimize friction: and the result was that, as in the realm of nature no two species are alike, although all conform to the same natural types, each colony had few features that were not distinct and peculiar to itself, although all might exhibit an indefinable character which stamped them and almost every native who came from them as unmistakably "British," with a spirit of loyalty to correspond, as the ordeal of the Great War proved.

Nigeria, then, at the outbreak of war exhibited in its general outlines the character-





JUJU DANCE BY PAGANS OF THE BAUCHI TABLELAND, NORTHERN NIGERIA.

istics of a typical British possession, while some of its features were the result of the natural conditions of Equatorial Africa, and others had been moulded by the successive stages of individual evolution through which it had passed. Its 500,000 square miles of territory naturally divide themselves into two parts. One was the wide coastal belt of tropical country, intersected by the deltas of great rivers, a land of exceeding luxuriance, but extremely unhealthy for Europeans. Here, as might be expected, the progress of civilization had been very slow. Lagos, the chief port and the only safe harbour on a thousand miles of coast, had long retained its unenviable notoriety as the headquarters of the slave trade. Even in 1914 the native population remained lamentably ready in moments of disturbance to revert to hereditary instincts of cannibalism and recognizing no authority, human or divine, as a bar to obedience of the edicts of any "fetish" that might gain a temporary vogue. To induce the natives of any neighbourhood where a "fetish" was installed to assist the authorities in suppressing it and destroying its stronghold was a diplomatic triumph of which British officials frequently had reason to be proud: and it goes without saying that in the interior of this wide belt of tropical country—which roughly coincided with the Southern Provinces of Nigeria—with its dense native population immune to the pestiferous climate which restricted European residence in their midst, the Germans seemed to have a rich field in which to sow the poison-seeds of sudden trouble. It goes without saying, too, that they made all the use they could of the opportunity. But the resultant crop of outbreaks—for there were some—must have

been a real disappointment to the cultivators. The disturbances were locally isolated and easily suppressed, because the Germans with their usual psychological ineptitude had not foreseen that even a pagan negro can understand when he is better treated than his neighbour. On each side of the frontier that divided German Cameroon from British Nigeria there was a wide strip of country in which the natives on both sides were thoroughly acquainted with the difference between British control and German rule. The idea that the natives on either side of this frontier would voluntarily raise a hand to substitute the latter for the former could only have occurred to minds obsessed with Teutonic pride and greed. So when the first shock was past and the early months of the war showed that the capital, Lagos, on its exposed island, was in no danger, the hum of military preparation to retaliate upon the German aggressor arose from many a place whose scarce-remembered name had been familiar to the British citizen at home in his childhood's school geography—Old Calabar and Bonny, on the rivers Brass and Forcados in the delta of the Niger, on the Slave Coast that was washed by the waves of the Bights of Benin and Biafra! In some minds perhaps these echoes awakened the truth that those past years of British effort in suppressing the slave trade and opening the Slave Coast to civilization, which had made all these place-names household words in England in the previous century, were bearing their fruit at last.

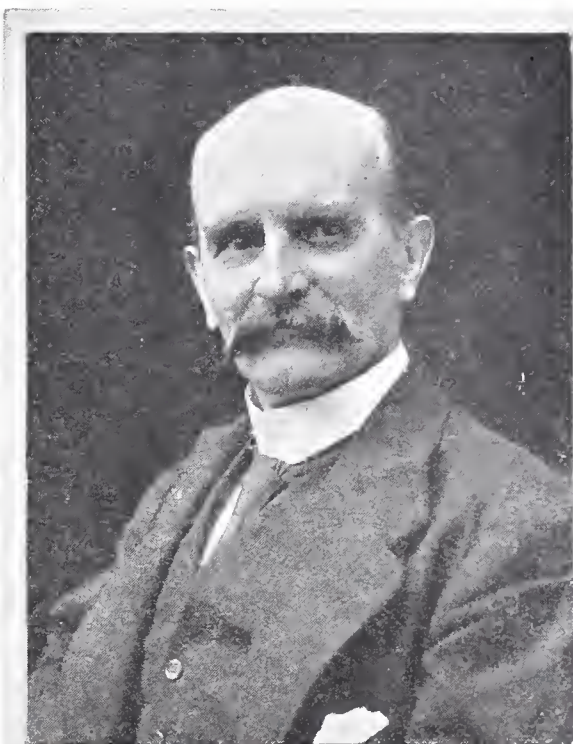
One fact on the other side of the picture must not be omitted, even if mere mention should seem to exaggerate its intrinsic importance. This was the occurrence in 1916, when the loyal



effort of Nigeria was at its height, of rioting in Lagos itself. Sir Frederick Lugard, the brilliant administrator of varied experience to whom was fortunately entrusted the government of Nigeria, described the rioting as the "disgraceful" result of the "intrigues and efforts of a small group of disaffected persons"; and its ostensible cause—the imposition of a small rate for the incalculable advantage of an abundant supply of filtered water in place of the highly contaminated well water which had made Lagos so unhealthy in the past—was manifestly only the excuse seized upon by the few educated agitators to excite the populace against the Government. In all parts of the world and in all ages the disproportionate power for mischief which British rule always placed in the hands of small cliques of educated persons with unscrupulous ambitions was the admitted "fly in the ointment" of satisfaction with which British administrators were, in almost every other respect, justified in regarding their work. It was a recognized drawback to the democratic education of uncivilized races, because there seemed always the danger lest mischief which was only annoying in peace time might become perilous in time of war. As a matter of fact and experience, however, the raising of serious issues appeared always to prove the danger illusory. Amid the simultaneous stirring of a people the excited antics of the agitator are not noticed, and in the noise of preparation on all sides his voice is drowned. So although the Lagos riot fully deserved the Governor-General's strong condemnation, it was easily suppressed by the police—greatly to the disappointment, no doubt, of the agitators' German friends in Cameroon—and it only merited this notice in a history of the war because its occurrence completed the suitability of Nigeria to be selected as a type to illustrate the conduct of Britain's Colonies generally during the war. In one form or another, under various names and multiiform pretexts, the mischievous agitator was active everywhere, consciously or unconsciously playing the game of Germany not only in every African colony but in every part of the British Empire and in the British Islands themselves. It was one of the certain advantages upon which the enemies of democratic countries could always count; and the latter therefore were justified in rejoicing, from experience in the war, that whenever the ointment is deeply

stirred—to carry on our simile—the fly is smothered.

Probably the Northern Provinces of Nigeria seemed to the German view even more promising than the Southern as a field for disruptive enterprise. Although in the South the prompt reply of the natives to Germany's peaceful penetration for war purposes had been a resolute manning of the frontier and voluntary scouting on behalf of their British rulers, the



[Russell.]

SIR FREDERICK D. LUGARD, G.C.M.G.,  
Governor-General of Nigeria.

North had seemed to offer larger opportunities. Here were vast territories of Moslem Emirs, formerly independent rival sovereigns, but now grouped together in subordination to a single English Governor-General; and the Germans knew by experience in Cameroon what troublesome subjects for coercing and kicking the Fulani and Hausa warriors were. So it was natural for them to suppose that Northern Nigeria was a magazine of combustible disaffection which they could explode with ease. German traders were ready there, as ever, with the usual German tale of British defeat in Europe and unlimited freedom in Africa for everyone who had courage to take it from a failing hand. But the magazine did not explode. On the contrary, it began to pour forth men and money in an unstinted stream for the British cause. For the usual tale of the usual German trader had been based upon the usual psychological ineptitude of the Teuton.

In the same way that the intriguers had failed to understand that the native of South Nigeria must have had his own ideas at first hand as to the difference between the British and the German, so they failed to realize that the shrewd Moslem warriors of the North had found in sympathetic British control an authority which they were all equally glad to obey because it assured them peace with honour in possession of their own. The Germans had not even the petty satisfaction of hearing of "fetish" disturbances or water-rate riots. On the contrary, they found that even within their own frontier their lying proclamations to the natives were disbelieved, and their preaching of a jihad among the Moslems in North



A TOGOLAND FETISH.

Cameroon fell on deaf ears. Further, when they tried to drive and bully their unwilling flock into taking action the latter retaliated, especially the Haussa settlers who had come from Nigeria. Indeed, of all the native chiefs in Cameroon only one, Sultan Karnak of Logone, took up arms on the German side, and he was killed in the first fight with the French.

Such being the attitude of both the Southern and Northern Provinces—in almost all other respects as totally different from one another as adjoining territories could be—it followed that the narrative of Nigeria's part in the war must

consist of continuous assistance willingly rendered to the British cause, rising in a crescendo from, first, the defence of the colony to, secondly, participation in the conquest of Cameroon, and, thirdly, to splendid cooperation in the distant and difficult campaigns in German East Africa. In addition to bearing the lion's share of the West African



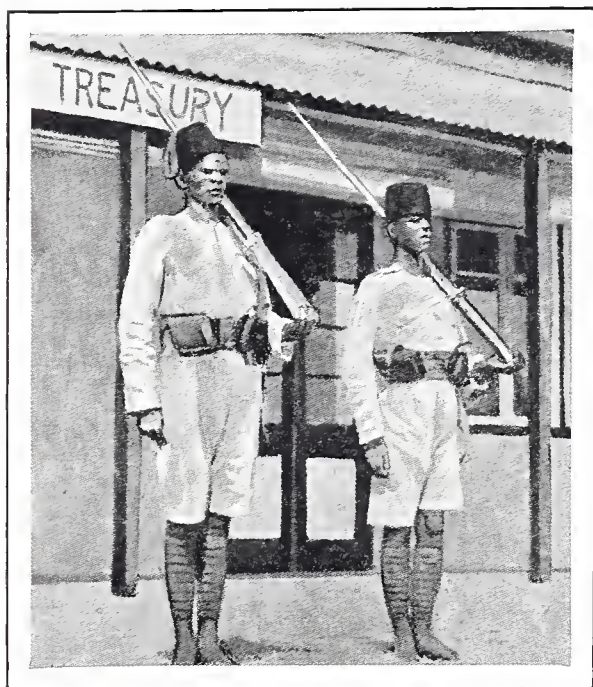
THE ALAKE OF ABEOKUTA WITH ONE OF HIS COUNSELLORS.

The Alake (seated) is a ruler who loyally supported the British cause.

effort—which became more important and onerous as the East African operations drew to an end, the westerners being immune to African diseases and clever bush fighters—Nigeria gave great help to its French neighbours against the Senussi and Tuaregs in 1917, for which it received warm recognition from the French Government. Yet in that year the strain of the campaign in German East Africa was at its heaviest, absorbing no fewer than 10,000 West African combatants and 10,000 carriers; and at the same time drafts of combatants numbering 3,000 men were always waiting for transport, with others ready to take their place as soon as this had been provided. Although the population from which recruits for these forces were drawn was collectively numerous, it was spread over a very large area, and included races speaking more than 30 distinct languages and in all stages from almost pure savagery to semi-civilized pagan people and Mahomedans. Though the common basis of this mixed material was excellent, it was essential that such contingents should be led by officers whom they knew and could trust; and at first there was a great paucity of officers,



because in peace time it had always been difficult to keep the normal military establishment up to strength at all. So the urgent needs of war caused commissions to be given to numbers of civilians who were respected by the natives,



**HAUSSA SOLDIERS GUARDING THE TREASURY AT LOKOJA.**

and at the same time officers of West African experience who had been lent to the War Office, Admiralty and Munitions Department in England were taken back. One result was that the civil staff of Nigeria was depleted to an extent that would have seemed highly imprudent in peace, yet so excellent was the spirit of the people that the Reports of the Administration revealed no special increase of disturbances during the years of war.

In addition to this great military effort, Nigeria contributed its quota to maintain that British naval supremacy in African waters which was essential to the very existence of the colonies. In the early weeks of the war in 1914 the entire Marine Department of the colony, consisting of 12 vessels with their crews, was sworn in as a "marine contingent" to the British Navy, and was sent under the command of Lieutenant Child—a brilliant officer whose subsequent death on service was greatly deplored—to join the naval forces operating against German Cameroon. Here it was reinforced by the launches which in peace time had carried on the regular service between Lagos and Sapele, and it gained excellent reports in the naval dispatches for efficient work performed in mine-sweeping, in which it

suffered many casualties. Meanwhile the entire staff of the Marine Department worked at high pressure strengthening its river vessels to carry big guns and protecting them with armour, making kites for mine-sweeping and repairing damaged ships, work which was all important at the beginning of an unexpected maritime campaign in African waters.

Almost finer, however, than the efficient help rendered to the fighting forces of the Empire was the financial effort which Nigeria put forth. In the first year of the war, as soon as it became apparent that it would



**A CHIEF OF THE GOLD COAST HINTERLAND.**

not be forced to defend its own existence, it had assumed the chief financial burden of the Cameroon campaign, amounting to about £320,000, of which a great part was generously contributed from their treasuries by the loyal Mahomedan Emirs of the north. In addition Nigeria offered to pay after the war the interest and a sinking fund of 1 per cent. on six millions of the Imperial war debt; and it was also



typical of the non-success of German propaganda generally that the native administrations voluntarily offered later to pay £50,000 per annum to the Imperial war debt after the war, besides subscribing a similar amount annually to the local war expenses. But the fact of all others which made the generous financial effort of Nigeria both pleasing and surprising was that at the outbreak of war it had been estimated that the local exchequer would require a loan of at least one and three quarter million from the Imperial Government; whereas, after all that had been given the Governor-General was

occurred among the fetish worshippers in Kwale in the Southern Provinces in October, 1914. This was engineered by reports spread from German sources and 41 persons were murdered, but after some days' hard fighting the rising was suppressed by troops and police. Disturbances also occurred during the same month in the north among the Bassa in the Niger and Nassarawa provinces and among the Bassa-Nge in the Bassa province, resulting in each case from rumours sedulously circulated by German agents that the British were being defeated and exterminated in Europe and that



NIGERIAN GUNNERS IN ACTION IN THE CAMEROONS.

able to report at the end of 1916 that not one penny would have to be asked for. Although so much more had needed to be done than was expected, and although the fall of revenue in consequence of the dislocation of trade and shortage of shipping had exceeded anticipation, the general accounts of Nigeria remained satisfactory. This financial miracle, achieved by strenuous exertions to raise revenue on one hand and drastic curtailment of expenditure on the other, was typical of the efforts of colonial administrations generally. Each in its degree and after its kind contributed far more than had been thought possible to the financial stability of the Empire, and each employed such discretion in the measures taken that nowhere was any political trouble created of a nature that would have seemed exceptionally serious even in time of peace.

There were troubles, of course. An outbreak

the natives need pay no taxes because the Germans would come in a few months and give them complete freedom. In each case the rising was promptly suppressed after fighting in which from 10 to 30 natives were killed; but such sporadic trouble continued until Cameroon as a centre of German propaganda had been disposed of. During 1915, for instance, no fewer than nine patrols of police and troops were necessitated in the Northern Provinces and 11 in the Southern by local disturbances fomented by German agents, who were, of course, greatly aided in their work by the shortage of officials, owing to so many having been taken for active service. Intrigues were facilitated, too, by the special political conditions existing in certain parts of the country. In Yorubaland, for instance, the subordinate chiefs had previously been restive under the native authority of the Alafin, recognized and





NIGERIAN TROOPS ON PARADE.

supported by the Government, and were inclined, therefore, to lend a ready ear to the Germans; but, as usual, the result was only an abortive rising vigorously suppressed — though not without some hard fighting: for the same qualities which made West Africans such fine bush fighters in German East Africa were, of course, shared by misguided insurgents at home.

On the whole, however, in Nigeria as in other colonies the loyalty of the natives generally and the chiefs in particular was very striking.

As an indicator of public feeling, moreover, no gauge is more accurate than that of the Quaker who, in collecting subscriptions for a widow, said to each of his friends, "I am sorry £10: how sorry art thou?" Judged by this test, the loyalty of the natives was remarkable; for in addition to the share of the generous general contributions which fell upon them individually, private voluntary subscriptions to the various war funds from natives amounted in the year 1916 to £25,000, making a total of over £40,000 thus subscribed in two years. And all this was in spite of the inevitable falling off in revenue and rise of prices consequent upon the general dislocation of trade, the absence of so many European managers of business, the shortage of shipping and the complete cessation of trade with Germany. The facts that two-thirds of the normal revenue of Nigeria was drawn from import duties and that, next to the United

Kingdom, Germany had been easily its best customer and purveyor sufficiently indicate the seriousness of the difficulties over which the financial elasticity of the country, the ability of the Government and the loyalty of the population triumphed.

One point remains to be noticed, because it emphasizes the similarity of the war problems which arose in Nigeria with those which presented themselves in other colonies, and



KING'S AFRICAN RIFLES FIGHTING IN THE BUSH IN EAST AFRICA.

also exercised the minds of the Government and the public at home for several years. This was the treatment accorded to German prisoners and deported or interned aliens; and we cannot do better than quote Sir



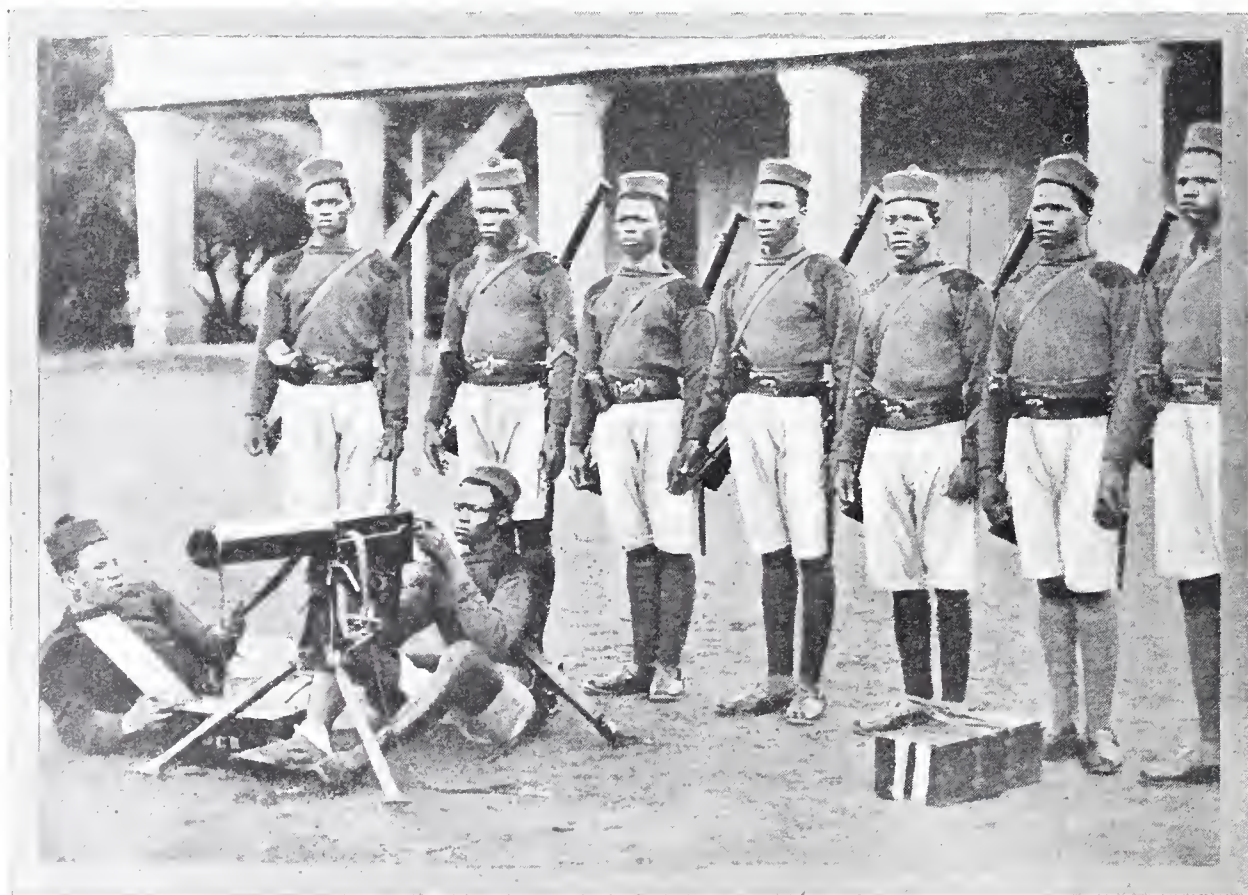
Frederick Lugard's statement on the subject :—

The many enemy firms in Nigeria were treated with every consideration, and were at first allowed to continue their business on condition that they neither remitted money to nor traded with Germany. But when evidence was forthcoming that some among them had endeavoured to incite the natives to rebellion—though this action was indignantly repudiated by others—it was decided to deport them all, and a Receiver was appointed to wind up their businesses. Every possible care and attention was bestowed upon these prisoners, and every courtesy was shown to the women, some of whom were hospitably entertained by the Mission Societies. The best arrangements possible in such circumstances were made for their comfort both in Nigeria and on the homeward voyage. In all, 768 men, 33 women and 8 children were deported to England from Nigeria up to the end of the year (1914), including those received from Cameroon.

No doubt the limited number of persons concerned, the unlimited power of the Governor-General, the simplicity of the issues involved compared with those which ramify throughout such complex international communities as congregate in London and other centres of British population, combined with the potent consideration that amidst the native population of Nigeria every individual hostile alien was a potential source of grave political mischief, all helped to make it easier for the Government of the colony thus drastically to settle in the first year of war a problem which was still

heatedly discussed in England four years later ; but it is at least worthy of note that the firm action was accompanied by the courtesy and consideration toward enemy prisoners which were honourable traditions in British warfare, although even at that early stage of the Great War it was well known that in similar circumstances the German code of international honour included no real equivalent.

Turning now to the other British possessions in West Africa, we find that the most noticeable features of their condition and conduct during the war exhibited a strong family likeness to those which gave Nigeria so pleasing an aspect to the patriotic Briton. This was, of course, to be expected, because they—the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia—had followed parallel lines of evolution from similarly small beginnings under the same changing influences, in environments that were almost identical. In the latter part of the fifteenth century, shortly before Columbus discovered America, Portuguese adventurers first explored the West Coast of Africa, and for two centuries from that day it was the happy hunting ground of European traders. Its position, so accessible to a coasting voyage after crossing the stormy Bay and passing the Pillars



A MACHINE GUN SECTION OF THE GOLD COAST REGIMENT IN EAST AFRICA.





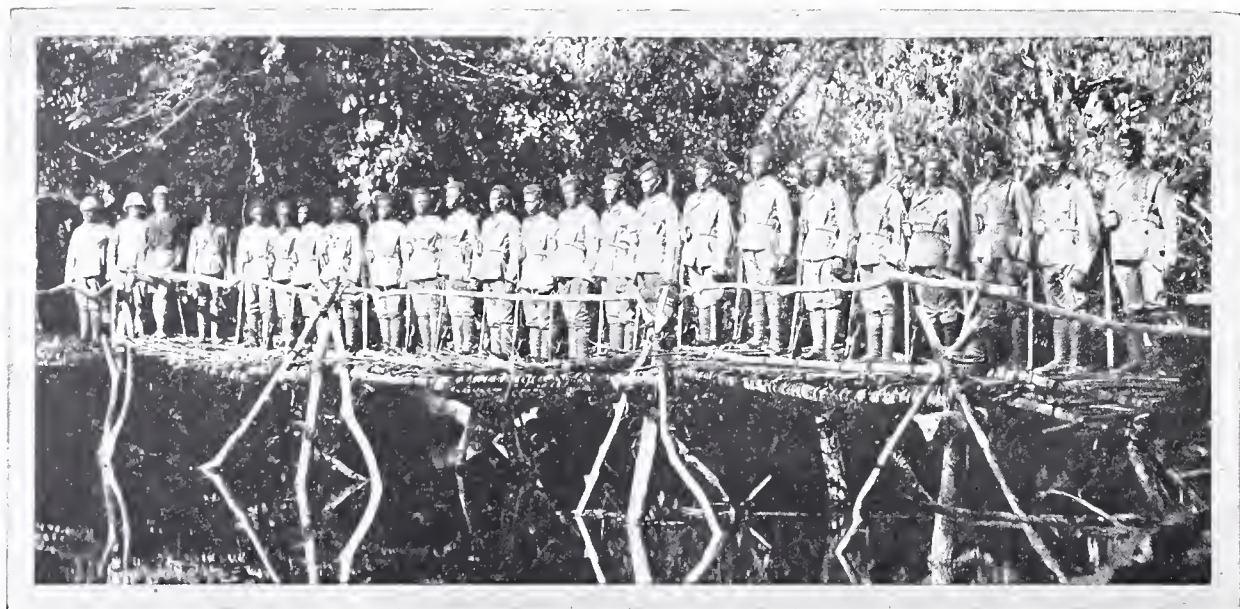
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## SUB-SECTION OF A BATTERY OF THE GOLD COAST REGIMENT.

of Hercules, invited every enterprising navigator, and by the middle of the seventeenth century every maritime Power in Europe except Spain had forts and factories established on the coast. In these trading settlements the rich produce of the surrounding country was collected and exchanged at absurd rates for cheap European goods; and in such names as "Gold Coast" and "Ivory Coast" memories linger of those days when fabulous fortunes might be amassed on the slenderest outlay. Alas, too, for these early records of European influence in the Dark Continent, a third long stretch of coast, where the maritime frontier of Nigeria runs, was equally well known to geographers as the "Slave Coast"; for West Africa was the cheapest market for the human cattle that the merchant princes of Europe sent in shiploads to their plantations in the West Indies and on the mainland of America. Such was the first stumbling step of West Africa's progress under European guidance. The next step was taken when each important fort or factory became the nucleus of a territory, acquired by degrees for various reasons and by diverse means; for with the ownership of territory came a certain responsibility of administration, because even trading companies cannot ignore the necessities of law and order on the highways leading to their depôts. The third step was taken, so far as British West Africa was concerned, when the awakened conscience of our people recognized

not only that slavery was an evil thing but also that the ownership of territory carried obligations for its proper development by the encouragement of cultivation, the education of the natives and the maintenance of law and order. The last was the more necessary in proportion as the expanding territories approached the ill-defined frontiers of important native rulers or the possessions of European rivals; but in each case the difficulty was enhanced by the unhealthiness of the coastal climate, rendering permanent residence almost impossible for Europeans and making malaria a scourge even for the natives. Much had been done, however, before the end of the nineteenth century to introduce sanitation and hygiene, and when the war broke out the administrations of the British West African colonies—although they were not "colonies" in any proper sense of the word—had all attained to a high level of efficiency which enabled their machinery of government to stand the shock of war without derangement. This was the more creditable because the administered territories were in no case homogeneous. The Gold Coast administration, for example, had charge not only of the Gold Coast Colony, so called, with population approaching a million, but also of the Northern Territories, with a population of about 360,000, and Ashanti, with more than a quarter of a million inhabitants—which, as a native kingdom, had been defeated in three





SAPPERS OF THE WEST AFRICAN REGIMENT (Sierra Leone) ON A BRIDGE OF THEIR OWN CONSTRUCTION.

separate wars before it was added in the first year of the twentieth century to the dominions under the British flag. Memories of this recent strife encouraged the Germans, no doubt, to hope that peaceful penetration from their adjoining territory of Togoland would find unhealed scars of Ashanti military pride which they might irritate to their advantage. In this, as in nearly all their calculations of advantage elsewhere, they were disappointed; for there was no difference between the chiefs or people of Ashanti and those of the Gold Coast proper in the "lavish" help, as the official Report described it, which they gave to the finances for the war, and of the 10 aeroplanes presented separately to the Government by communities, chiefs and tribes under the Administration, two bore the name of "Ashanti." Disturbances in Ashanti actually decreased during the war in spite of the reduction of the European civil staff, and never were political relations between ruled and rulers more cordial. Grateful mention is also made in the Annual Report of the colony after the second year of war of "the unanimous and deep loyalty of all Ashanti chiefs," although up to the very eve of war they had not scrupled to worry the Government by quarrelling with one another. Deeds had been added to words of loyalty as soon as the hint was given that their assistance would be welcome. The force of 600 carriers asked for was supplied at surprisingly short notice; a day and night service of runners between the frontier and headquarters was organized; a force of 200 scouts was thrown out as far as the Volta River, which formed the Ashanti boundary

of German Togoland; and the chiefs of Kumawu, Agogo and Kwaman and all their warriors remained under arms so long as any danger remained—"exemplary and laudable conduct" for which the Governor gave them due meed of praise.

Another chief, the Agunahene, offered the whole of the year's cocoa crop towards the expenses of the war; but—to quote the official Report again—"such disproportionate generosity was not encouraged." Nevertheless £1,000 was accepted from the chief of Adansi; and by the end of 1914 only, the small subscriptions from individual natives of Ashanti reached the total of £5,000. No wonder that British officials who had worked for years in Ashanti were almost as surprised as pleased; for the fact was evident that the natives, many of whom must have borne arms against the English in the last Ashanti War, were so absolutely assured of British victory that their one idea was to do something to win a share in the honour of it. Nor was this enthusiasm evanescent; for a subsequent annual Report noted—when the thunders of war had rumbled away far from the Gold Coast and Togoland—that "the exuberant loyalty of the chiefs and people continued."

But perhaps the most surprising and certainly not the least pleasing feature of the history of Ashanti during the war was that internal trade was increasingly brisk and the revenue steadily rose. The condition of the people became indeed almost ideal; for money was plentiful, necessities were cheap, luxuries dear and disturbances unknown. Over £9,000 was sub-



scribed to the Prince of Wales's Fund and £1,000 to the Red Cross, and more than 2,000 carriers had been supplied for the campaign in Cameroon. For the supposed weak spot in Britain's West African armour the record of Ashanti could not have provided pleasant reading for the enemy.

The fact is that Ashanti exhibited exactly the same phenomenon as other African territories which had only a short while before accepted a position in the British Empire after laying down their defeated arms. It had become indistinguishable in loyalty from the other sections of the community amid which its lot was cast because it had discovered that the Government could be relied upon for just and even generous treatment; and, as in all the other cases, this incentive to loyalty was greatly strengthened as the war went on by the further discovery that the British command of the sea was the decisive factor in colonial welfare. In spite of the scarcity of shipping for other than Imperial purposes, in spite of the great expenditure upon military matters—brought directly home to the Ashanti native when he saw that one-twelfth of the total population of Kumasi, the capital, wore the uniform of the Gold Coast Regiment—and in spite of the fact that the petty traders were unable to get any of the cheap German goods upon which they had largely relied for stock in trade before the war—in spite of all these and

many minor evidences of the strain which had been imposed upon the country, he saw that everyone around him was in fact in better circumstances even than in previous years. Trade which at the end of 1914 was thankfully described as "good on the whole" deserved the unqualified encomium of "brisk" in 1915, and in proportion as the war receded into distant places the improvement of trade continued. Seeing all this, the native of Ashanti could not help knowing that the shrewdness for which he had a high reputation had not been at fault when he selected loyalty as the best policy in his own interests; and in the fact that no fewer than 50,000 cattle were sold or slaughtered to provide meat for troops on service those who knew Ashanti well and understood the high value set upon the possession of cattle as proof of wealth saw the most striking of all evidence of the extent to which native enthusiasm had been stirred. Perhaps the only drawbacks, beside the scarcity of shipping and the absence of cheap German goods, which were felt in Ashanti on account of the war, were the shortage of the French coin in which the trade in cattle was conducted and the reluctance of the natives to use paper money as a substitute. In the civilized countries of temperate latitudes such reluctance might have been attributed to suspicion regarding the Government's credit; but for natives who lived in wooden dwellings



28th CAPE COAST DETACHMENT (VOLUNTEERS).

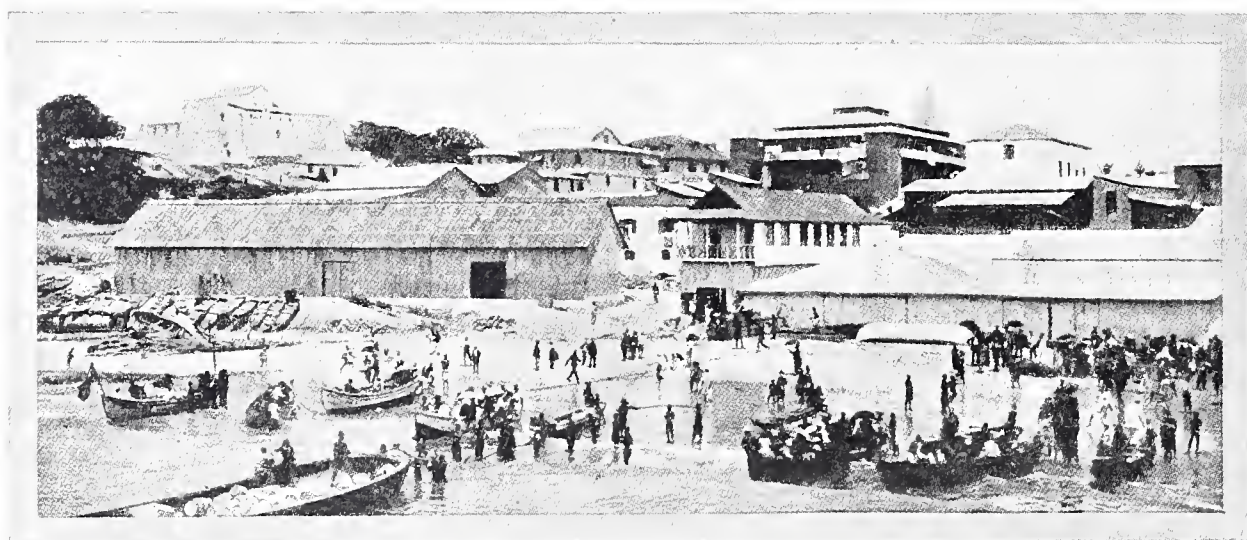
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in equatorial regions perils from insects, weather and fire were quite sufficient to cause them to regard scraps of paper as an insecure basis for permanent wealth.

It would have been surprising and disappointing indeed if the natives of the older parts of the Gold Coast, especially Gold Coast Colony itself, had fallen behind Ashanti in enthusiasm for the British cause in the war. But this was far from the case. In addition to the shrewdness and sound judgment for which they were conspicuous equally with the Ashanti, the democratic tendency which has always been their most marked political characteristic was naturally on the side of the

of aeroplanes, the subscription from a chief in the interior to the Edith Cavell Fund, the enlisting of a native barrister and of clerks in the ranks of the Gold Coast Regiment for active service in the Cameroons, these and other instances, all of which in due time will have their record, are the endeavour of the native community to express articulately that it is heart and soul with the Empire and that any other connection is unthinkable.

When an Empire's proconsuls were able, or rather were compelled, to rise to this spirit of peroration after pages of dry official review of administrative measures and financial statistics, we have the best of testimony to the staunchness of those outposts of Empire where the rival traders of Europe formerly scrambled for gold and ivory and slaves. The natives were



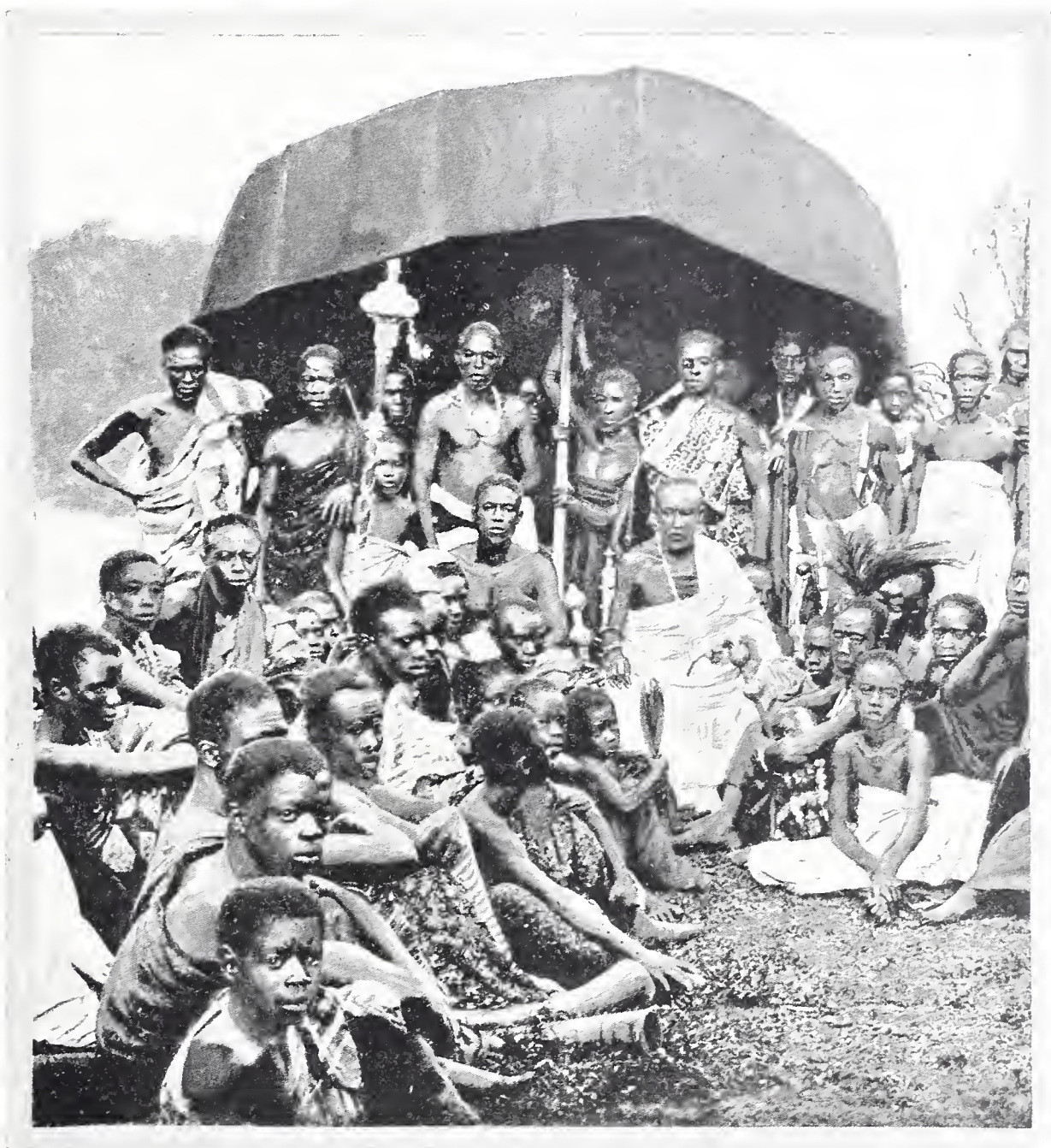
SEKONDI, GOLD COAST: NATIVES PREPARING TO BOARD A MAIL-STEAMER.

English and French in the war, and their strength of character could be relied upon to maintain it by their conduct in emergency. No more convincing evidence of this could be needed than the fact that after two years of war the Governor of the Gold Coast was able to summarize the situation as follows, in the concluding paragraph of his annual report for 1916:—

It is no exaggeration to say that, on the whole, the twelve months have been a period of prosperity for the native community; and, for the fact that this Colony can record a year of prosperity during the great war, the credit is given intelligently and gratefully where it is due—to the Navy. It is generally realized that the existence of the Colony as it is to-day depends upon its communications by sea, and this fact, perhaps more than any other, has brought home to the community their dependence on the Crown and their immediate concern in the fortunes of the war. It may be too early now to attempt any summary of the effect the war has had or will have on the course of affairs in this Colony. One effect, however, is obvious; it has compelled the native to take stock of things as they are and of things as they might be, and the result appears to have been to confirm and to evoke expression of his loyalty. Generous subscriptions from all parts of the Colony to the War Fund, to the Red Cross, to the Belgian Relief Fund, gifts

still, as they had been in those old days, pagans liable to outbursts of barbarous fetishism, when a cannibal banquet would have excited qualms neither of conscience nor appetite; and the leaven of Christians and Mahomedans, though it grew steadily, was still too small to exert political influence. Thus the material which British administrators had had to handle was still the same as that which surrounded the Portuguese who built the Fort of Elmina and founded the first settlement on this rich coast. After stormy years of rivalry Elmina was taken from the Portuguese by the Dutch; and the English merchants, who built a fort at Kormantin in 1618, were the third competing nationality to appear upon the scene. Gradually its hold strengthened, and in 1662 the first English company was chartered to trade with the Gold Coast, giving place 10 years later to the Royal African Company, whose chief fort, the well-known Cape Coast Castle, became the strongest on the whole stretch of coast. Among the





AN ASHANTI CHIEF AND HIS FOLLOWERS AT KUMASI.

other forts built by the Company was one at Accra, now the colonial capital; but after about 80 years the settlements were transferred to the African Company of Merchants, constituted by Act of Parliament, and again transferred in 1821 to the Crown, and placed under the government of Sierra Leone. During all these changes the settlements had been growing in importance and extent of territory, rendering the political situation increasingly difficult, because English and Dutch forts alternated in great measure along the coast. In 1867 the Sweet River was by agreement made the boundary between Dutch and English spheres of influence, but five years later the Dutch transferred all their forts to Great Britain, which had previously bought out the

Danes. Thus the whole of the coast fell into British hands and was created a new administration, under the title of Gold Coast Colony. It was out of these proceedings that the series of three wars with Ashanti commenced in 1873, because the King claimed the overlordship of Elmina, and objected to the establishment of a barrier of British territory between Ashanti and the sea.

As an historical coincidence with a moral, it is interesting to note that almost at the same time other proceedings, in another continent, with international transfers of territory and the creation of a new administration, had taken place, involving wars to follow. The territory was Alsace and Lorraine, and the new administration was the German Empire. Of the wars





KIKUYU WARRIORS RECRUITED AS SCOUTS.

that followed, this chapter is a fragment of the record. It was therefore deeply significant of the difference between British and German rule that in one case the transferred territories should have become staunchly loyal to their new rulers in war as well as in peace, and that in the other they should have nursed a bitter hope of vengeance, accentuated in peace by such occurrences as the Zabern incident and in war by the wholesale deportations and internments of their inhabitants. With this instructive contrast in mind, the oft-quoted irony of fate might seem to have been once more strikingly illustrated in the competition between Ashanti and the belt of coastal territory which shuts it from the sea in the purchase of aeroplanes for use against the German Empire.

And the aeroplanes were but a small part of the Gold Coast's contribution for the war. It not only paid the entire cost of its own military forces sent into Togoland, but also defrayed all the expenses of the British operations there, besides voting £200,000 towards the general expenses of the war and paying a substantial contribution to the cost of sending troops to German East Africa on the other side of the continent. Of the military operations themselves in Togoland, Cameroon and German

East Africa, and the part played therein by the representative forces of combatants and carriers from the Gold Coast, the full narrative is given in other chapters; here it will suffice to restate that the Gold Coast Regiment took the leading part in the conquest of Togoland, and that in the conquest of Cameroon, which was completed in February, 1916, Major-General Sir C. M. Dobell reported that the corps, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Rose, had particularly distinguished itself throughout the whole of the operations. After a very brief rest upon its well-won laurels it was also the first regiment to go from West Africa to fight in German East Africa, whither it sailed in July, 1916, followed by a volunteer contingent from the Gold Coast in November.

In this chapter, however, we are rather concerned with the conduct of the Government and the attitude of the people which enabled the colony to maintain and improve the effort whereby so much was achieved, and when it has been stated that the revenues rose during the years of war to be easily the largest on record, while the people were noticeably more prosperous and contented, better able and even more willing to continue their contributions, collectively and individually, to the various war



funds, it might seem that little more remains to be said.

But new situations always create novel problems; because every advantage in the complex circumstances of world politics and commerce seems to have its drawback and every hardship brings its compensations. Thus in analysing the great increase of revenue which coincided with war conditions we find that this occurred because the colony's exports increased by 30 per cent., while the imports only declined 1 per cent., and this in spite of the fact that shipping decreased by 46 per cent. Manifestly, therefore, the financial prosperity of the colony was largely based upon a general rise of prices. In itself this might seem to be bad rather than good; but comparison of the changes in exports and imports showed that the balance of profit was largely on the side of the colony. As, however, the United Kingdom maintained and even increased its commanding position as the colony's chief customer, it might be argued that the gain of the Gold Coast was made at the cost of Great Britain. But here again the figures showed that in the all-important matter of securing new markets for industrial products Great Britain gained an increase, both relatively and absolutely, over foreign countries in its exports to the Gold Coast. As both the United

States and Holland gained some increase also, apparently owing to the shortage of British shipping causing goods to be sent direct which had formerly been shipped *via* the United Kingdom, it was manifest that the loss had fallen elsewhere. The explanation was to be found, of course, in the complete stoppage of German trade; and the new problem, therefore, which the new situation had created was how to retain after the war for Great Britain and her colonies the dual advantage which the command of the sea had given to them during the years of war. This brief examination of the questions arising from one aspect of the finances of a single African colony gave an insight into the war behind the war which was already being waged against Germany in all parts of the world.

A minor detail, deserving notice because it threw light from another point of view upon the new conditions created by the war, was the series of visits made by Gold Coast officials to the headquarters of different districts in Togoland after its conquest, to examine the plantations of trees of economic value from all parts of the world, including those indigenous to the country, which the Germans had established. These plantations the Colonial Government at once decided to be well worth protecting and



A HELIOGRAPH STATION OF THE KING'S AFRICAN RIFLES.





#### AN OUTPOST OF EMPIRE.

imitating at British headquarter districts: a practical application of the old maxim, *Fas est et ab hoste doceri*, which was naturally suggested by many other details of the machinery of German administrations which fell into British hands in different parts of the world.

One more phenomenon may be selected from this page of the history of the Gold Coast, because it illustrated the intermingling of good and bad results amid the general upheaval of war, until very often it became impossible to decide whether an innovation should be regarded as advantageous or the reverse. The timber trade of the colony suffered more, per-

haps, than any other department of industry from the effect of war in reducing the available shipping. In fact, it was completely stopped, and the consequence was clearly shown in a large item of decrease in the statistics of revenue from exports. On the other hand, the timber trade had before the war assumed dimensions which threatened serious injury to the forests, which were one of the colony's most valuable assets. To have imposed drastic restrictions upon the trade, so as to reduce it within the bounds of prudent husbandry, might have been difficult, and would certainly have been unpopular; but the war brought for the forests a much-needed respite from the hum-



berer's axe, and therefore the deficit of the timber trade from the annual revenues might have been accepted as a cheap price to pay for the chance of recuperation given to the timber-producing areas. But here another factor came in. The mineral wealth of the country was, of course, even more important than its wood, and the same scarcity of shipping which had stopped the timber trade had also caused a great scarcity of coal for the mines. Fuel had to be found somehow to keep them going, and recourse was naturally had to the forests for wood. Thus a new timber problem, even more insistent than the other, arose. Moreover, if one investigated the shortage of shipping itself, one soon began to doubt whether it should be regarded as a disadvantage, in spite of the manifest difficulties directly attributable to it. For in war injury inflicted upon the enemy counterbalances equivalent damage suffered by oneself, at any rate in a war of attrition between two great empires neither of which was within striking distance of the vital parts of the other; and therefore the fact that more than half of the shortage of shipping was directly due to the shutting down of German trade would have justified the investigator in writing off at least a moiety of the trouble as a *contra* against Germany. As, moreover, the injury struck Germany in commercial centres at home, which provided her vital organs directly with the sinews of war, it is clear that the profit and loss of this moiety account left a balance in favour of Great Britain, and to that extent assisted towards a victorious termination of the war. Commerce, too, like Nature, abhors a vacuum; and the appearance of American shipping for the first time on the Gold Coast might be regarded as the commencement of a new order of things destined enormously to outweigh in benefit to Africa all the temporary disadvantage of the lack of ships from Europe during the war. So in whatever direction the historian might endeavour to feel his way along a chain of cause and effect from new conditions introduced into the British African colonies by the war, he would never get far from the wisdom of Bacon's saying that innovations always mend some things and impair others. Thus the same Colonial Reports which noticed the laudable enthusiasm of the European officials—as conspicuous in every colony as in the Gold Coast or Nigeria—to take service with the colours, and the good work done by those from the Gold Coast entrusted with the administra-

tion of Togoland after its conquest, were also obliged to observe that the police work was handicapped by "the shortage of European staff," that the Survey Department was "in abeyance owing to the European officers rejoining the colours," that the Technical School at Accra was "temporarily closed owing to the war."

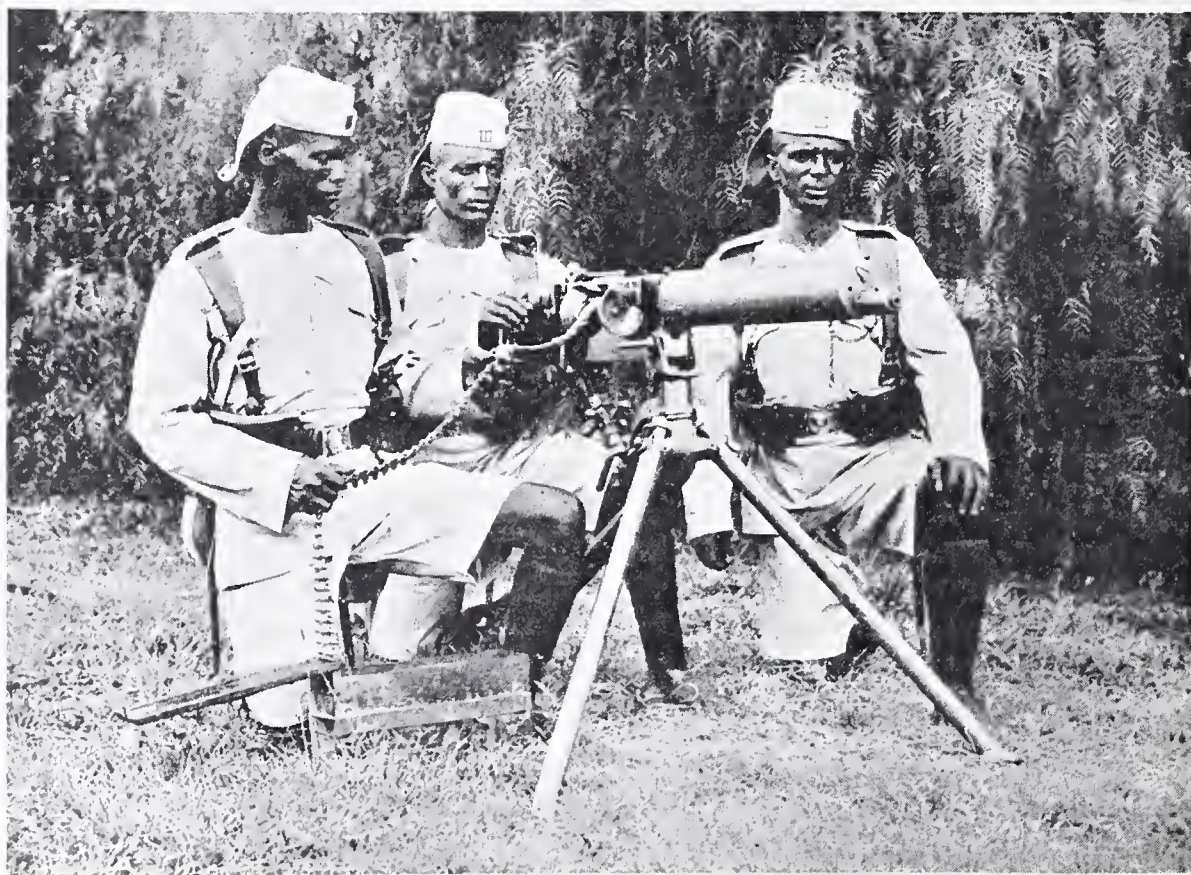
Before leaving the Gold Coast an instructive backward glance must be given to the Northern Territories, which were annexed in 1901 with Ashanti, if only for the purpose of understanding why these Territories, covering more than 30,000 square miles and dignified by a special Annual Report, need so little mention in connexion with the war. It was not that 15 years of British rule had been inadequate to imbue the natives with a sense of loyalty so much as that the natives only numbered about 11 to the square mile. Nor was it any lack of Imperial spirit which debarred the administration from contributing to the Empire's war expenses from its revenue so much as that on September 1, 1908, when Caravan Tolls were abolished, "the revenue of the Protectorate," to quote the annual report for 1915, "became an almost negligible quantity," in which interesting condition it had still remained, or had at least, in the words of the report again, "undergone no appreciable change," during later years of war. There was no intentional humour in these dry statements of official fact; but they sufficiently explain why the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast were not credited with any leading part in the conduct of the war. Indeed, the same unconscious humour that the official reports suggested seemed to pervade their politics, for the only way in which these seemed to have been affected by the war was that the paucity of European officials, owing to the number who had gone to the army, gave the natives opportunity to revive their old practice of free fights across the Anglo-French frontier! As this frontier frequently passed through the middle of a village, it must be admitted that the temptation to hostilities was great. Nevertheless the disturbances indicated a generous degree of ignorance as to what English and French were doing at that moment in Belgium and on the Marne. Otherwise the general behaviour of the natives in the difficult circumstances arising from lack of European supervision was exemplary, and as soon as it became known that contri-

butions for war funds would be welcome, a spontaneous response came from all quarters. From the munificent donation of £20 by the "Na of Mamorussi" down to a cow, a sheep, a fowl, or a handful of cowries from less distinguished individuals, subscriptions came rolling in, until the astounding total—in the circumstances—of £1,826 was reached, and was described in the official report as a "remarkable demonstration of loyalty to the Government." Such it undoubtedly was.

There was indeed one respect in which the fortunes of the Great War directly affected the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. In 1915 a disappointing falling-off was observed in what would have been revenue, if the Territories had had any, but in default was tabulated as "traffie," owing to a sudden preference evinced by caravans of cattle, sheep and donkeys for the Togoland routes to the coast. As a matter of fact, these routes were more convenient; and it was an apt commentary upon the difference between British and German treatment of the native that the convenience had been ignored until the country came into British hands.

This was not the only advantage which the change of ownership brought to Togoland even within the first twelve months; and the

British official must have felt amply rewarded for past labours in the unhealthy Gold Coast when in Togoland he found himself, like a fairy godmother, waving a wand of magic transformation over rich territories where the Germans, with all their scientific thoroughness and their "kultur," had been able to create so little. During that first year the Togoland natives cultivated 33 per cent. more land than they had ever cultivated before. They found themselves for the first time possessed of leisure for the enjoyment of life, owing to their release from constant vexatious interference and forced labour of various kinds. They discovered that it was no longer necessary to make their farms as far as possible from roads and railways in order to escape German officials and tax collectors: so produce was grown for the first time in the best and most convenient places, whereby much time and labour formerly wasted in the transportation of the crops was saved. Whipping was no longer an everyday punishment for some of them: and the public trial of cases gave them confidence that they were receiving justice. The prosperity of the country so increased that it suddenly became, in 1916, self-supporting. Not a bad record this for one year of British rule in a land peopled by pagans with cannibal



[Ministry of Information.

MAXIM GUN CREW OF THE KING'S AFRICAN RIFLES.



tendencies, who would not put out a conflagration in their own villages for fear of offending the lightning "fetish" who caused it! Perhaps it helps to explain why during the years of war the writers of annual Colonial Reports had to run through the whole gamut of official terms of praise in describing the "laudable," "exemplary," "highly creditable" and "most encouraging" behaviour of the wide dominions under their control.

In concluding this notice of the Gold Coast it should be added that this colony was also a type of the rest in the activity with which it bombarded German interests with paper bullets of Ordinances such as the "Trading with Enemy Ordinance," the "Deportation of Suspects Ordinance," the "Enemy Property Control and Disposal Ordinance," and the "British Property in Enemy Territory and Claims against Enemies Returns Ordinance." These things were part of the scientific appliances of modern warfare, but the fighting strength still lay as always in the hearts of a contented people behind them.

Hitherto, in Nigeria and the Gold Coast, we have been examining types of that class of African colonies of which each had its own war problem at its very doors from the moment when hostilities broke out in Europe. In each case the Germans had been secretly preparing for the event for years wherever the frontiers touched. The British on their side had also been aware for years that the trouble was brewing and were prepared in a way with plans for self-defence; but this was very different from actual preparation to attack. Consistent preparedness for an event which may occur at any time, but does not seem likely to occur immediately, imposes a constant strain upon the strength and resources of a government, and when this is, as were all the local governments of British Colonies, always confronted by urgent tasks of administration which demand all its strength and resources, the duty of preparedness for dangers which may not materialise for years is apt to be pushed into the background and kept there. Therefore the assailant—especially so painstaking an assailant as the Germans were proved to have been wherever subsequent events cast light upon the details of their pre-war plans—can generally count upon the important elements of surprise to secure a large measure of initial success for his attack. That this success was not won at any of the points where

the frontiers of British and German territory met in Africa was the result of two factors upon which neither side had reckoned. The first was that the element of surprise almost equally affected both, instead of being all on the side of the Germans. The reason was that Berlin



[Elliott &amp; Fry.]

**SIR HUGH CLIFFORD, K.C.M.G.**  
Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the  
Gold Coast.

had miscalculated things. So far as the outbreak of war affected France, the element of surprise was complete enough and the consequent initial success almost overwhelming: but the immediate entry of Great Britain into the war was a counter-surprise which just saved the situation in Europe. And in Africa, of course, it forestalled the German surprise altogether. There the Germans were not ready to attack the British colonies because they had not planned war against the British Empire until France should be crippled. This was the immediate reason why, when the shock came, almost every British colonial unit found itself able not only to stand firm, but also quickly to take the offensive. But a deeper reason than this underlay the unexpected strength which the British colonies exhibited. Their administration had been the surest preparation of the country and the people against the worst that any enemy could do. The fact, already noticed in Nigeria and equally evident in the Gold Coast, that the natives nearest to the German frontier were always the most loyal





FETISH MEN OF SIERRA LEONE.

to their British rulers, showed how potent a factor the contrast between British and German methods was in deciding the verdict of Africa in the day of trial; and even in the cases of British colonies remote from German frontiers the war showed how well the pagan natives had absorbed the lesson of loyalty to rulers who in true democratic spirit served them well, even without the "horrid example" of Teuton autoocracy across the border to enforce it.

Sierra Leone, on the far western coast of Africa, where the Germans had obtained no footing whatever, belonged to this class; and as the headquarters of both the West India and West Africa Regiments, it was naturally filled with military ardour when the opportunity for service on the grand scale at last arose. It cheerfully bore the entire cost of its military forces sent to the various theatres of war, where their services are included in the records of the several campaigns. From Sierra Leone, indeed, Britain had a prescriptive right to look for loyal service, because its population was bound to the Empire by unusual ties. Its very existence as a recognizable unit among the communities of the world arose from the generous, if tardy, reparation which Britain endeavoured to make for past offences against humanity by the sacrifices involved and the difficulties en-

countered in the abandonment of slavery. As a result there were in England numbers of destitute negroes who no longer had homes either in America or Africa; the peninsula of Sierra Leone was ceded by its owners to Great Britain to be used as an asylum for these waifs and its port and capital was named Freetown. Subsequent energy displayed in suppressing the slave trade in African waters also left large numbers of Africans who were rescued by British cruisers from slave ships as an awkward encumbrance on the hands of their liberators. To restore these unhappy people to their homes was not practicable; nor would it have been wise, because they would merely have been kidnapped again; so they were added to the growing population of Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leonis became largely traders, teachers, lawyers, but did not take kindly to agriculture, and the 4,000 square miles of British territory into which the settlement had expanded were not developed in agriculture or industry to one-fifth of their potential capacity.\* Fighting, however, was a kind of work for which the West African always had stomach; and there was no limit

\* Including a protectorate which formed the hinterland of the colony, Sierra Leone has an area of 31,000 square miles.



to the hardships which he would not cheerfully endure if he were led, not driven, by those in whom he trusted. So it went without saying that Sierra Leone's share in the war was worthy of the colony's history and the Empire's need. In the campaign against the German Cameroon the joint Anglo-French Expeditionary Force was commanded by Major-General Sir C. M. Dobell, K.C.B., who had been, before the war, Inspector-General of the West African Frontier Force, the ranks of which were entirely filled by West Coast Natives. It formed the British part of the Joint Expeditionary Force, and in the decisive but strenuous fighting of February 1915 most of the casualties were among the Sierra Leone battalion. By June the Force had lost 25 per cent. of its strength, but the gaiety, courage, and discipline of these born fighters was unaffected. 'It was impossible, the General reported, to praise them too highly. To compare this with the state of things on the German side, where the natives were compelled to fight by cruelty and retaliated when they dared, throws some light on the causes which conduced to the German defeat in the field and

rendered its consequences afterwards so complete.

Gambia falls into a different category from Sierra Leone. Indeed, inasmuch as its capital, Bathurst, was situated on the island, or rather the sandbank, of St. Mary, at the mouth of the River Gambia, its effort in the war has already been mentioned in the chapter dealing with the Island Colonies; but it is essentially a territory of the African mainland, consisting of about 4,000 square miles, adjoining both banks of the Gambia from the Atlantic up to the point where the river becomes unnavigable owing to the Barraconda Rapids. Its military strength was limited to a single company of the West African Frontier Force, consisting of four officers and 120 N.C.O.'s and men, with a Police numbering only 82, which was armed for military as well as civil duty. In this quiet and extremely unhealthy backwater of the Empire the news that war had broken out at once caused rapid enrolment of a Volunteer Defence Force and brisk recruitment for the troops and police; but as the ripples of war receded farther and farther from



SACKVILLE STREET, FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE.



the mouth of the Gambia the colony quietly settled down to the duty of bearing the entire cost of its military force, contributing to war funds, and "carrying on." Owing to the employment of the Gambia Company of the West African Field Force in the Cameroons, where it rendered fine service, the annual cost rose to £8,900, or £2,000 more than its cost in peace time, while the contributions to war funds reached nearly £13,000 by the end of 1916, and these additional expenses had to be met in spite of decreased trade and increased cost of living, from a revenue which depended chiefly upon ground nuts, and in which a decline in postal receipts was gravely noticed

from their own land. Indeed, in a general review of the circumstances of distant British colonies like Gambia, which were not touched directly by the military operations, one might be inclined to regard war almost as a medicine, unpleasant to taste but beneficial in result. Certainly it evoked in the natives a spirit of loyalty and a sense of moral discipline of whose strength they had themselves been previously unconscious; and it brought them into contact with realities of which they had not even dreamed, while in some respects it undoubtedly laid the foundation of a prosperity which might not otherwise have come within their reach. The Colonial Governments, too, learned some



A STREET IN BATHURST, GAMBIA.

as resulting from the suppressed activities of German stamp collectors. But, as happened everywhere in the colonies, each war-time drawback brought its compensating advantage. The general rise in prices gave a much-needed fillip to the customs duties on which the revenue depended to meet expenditure; and on the other side of the account the stoppage of public works owing to depletion of the European staff, by the absence of officials on active service, reduced the expenditure, so that a margin of revenue was freed for war expenses. That the imports of spirits, chiefly gin from Holland, fell off largely was also a fact which manifestly had its brighter side; and even the falling off in the import of rice to feed the natives had the good result of teaching them to grow foodstuffs and to get larger crops

lessons which were destined to bear good fruit in future years, although they were not particularized in the official records of those stormy times.

The third of Africa's four wars—the prolonged and strenuous operations against German East Africa—introduces a new set of combatant territories on the British side. Mention has indeed been made of the splendid part played in these campaigns by the West African Frontier Force: and how much was done by the indomitable bush-fighters from Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia in East Africa, when the West African campaigns of Togoland and the Cameroons had been cleanly finished, is detailed in the narrative of the military operations. But, incalculable as the value of this reinforcement from the West



undoubtedly was, it could not lift the immense burden which conflict with so powerful a neighbour as German East Africa had placed upon the eastern colonies, especially the three protectorates, of British East Africa, Uganda and Nyasaland.

All three protectorates were of relatively recent date, and the European officials and settlers were very few in comparison with the vastness of the territory administered; but there had been no hesitation in the loyal example which they set, for it is safe to say that every available European of military age went on active service. Though the native population was not inconsiderable, fighting tribes of suitable material were scarce among them; nevertheless the King's African Rifles, the local native force, other than police, of the three Protectorates, which had consisted only of three weak battalions, 2,000 men in all, at the outbreak of war reached by the end of 1917 an authorized strength of 20 battalions, containing no fewer than 30,000 men, of whom more than 20,000 were actually employed and doing splendid service in German East Africa. In addition large bodies of irregular native troops were raised, and many tens of thousands of carriers were enlisted for service in German East Africa, amounting to nearly half of the entire suitable male population.

Although the revenues of Uganda and Nyasaland were so inadequate for the cost of ordinary administration in peace time that they were still in receipt of State aid for the purpose from Imperial funds, and British East Africa itself had only very recently emerged from a similar position of pecuniary dependence, nevertheless those three Protectorates, with Zanzibar, bore the whole cost of their ordinary local forces while on service in German East Africa, thus largely reducing the cost of the campaign to Great Britain, although in order to do this they had to cut down their expenditure even upon works of urgent necessity.

They were united in resolve to support the British cause and cooperated in the campaign in German East Africa; but each of the three Protectorates had its own problem to face at the outbreak of war, because each was contiguous with German territory. British East Africa took the leading part, not only because it was the largest and most important, besides being the only one which was self-supporting at that time, but also because it had by far the longest frontier exposed

to invasion on one side, the south, while it alone possessed on another side, the east, a sea frontier where the danger of attacks by German raiders was very real at first. It was therefore perhaps natural, but none the less noteworthy, that British East Africa,



LIBERATED SLAVE GIRLS AT THE HOME IN LOKOJA, NIGERIA.

exposed as it was to danger on two sides should have been one of the very first places in the Empire to adopt compulsory military service for Europeans, whereby two-thirds of the settlers and nearly one-half of the officials joined the Colours at once: while of the native population, in addition to the great contribution already mentioned to the King's African Rifles and the irregular combatant troops raised for local operations, no fewer than 150,000 of the total male population of 300,000 suitable for carriers were enlisted and sent on service. From the numbers and the warlike habits of the Masai, as well as the contiguity of the Masai Reserve to the German frontier, the greatest trouble might have been anticipated from them in a maladministered territory: but two invasions of the Reserve by the Germans only increased the ardour of their loyalty and doubled the enthusiasm with which they responded to the call for carriers when the time came for them to help in turning the tables finally upon the enemy. At the same time the Masai cattle-breeders—it was traditional for the Masai warrior to marry and settle down as a cattle breeder when his days of fighting and



TROPICAL EAST AFRICA.

promiscuous love-making were over—spontaneously contributed the, for them, immense quantity of Rs.23,000 worth of cattle and sheep for meat for the fighting troops. Other native Reserves did equally well, according to their powers, and the tribes of Kavirondo, Nandi and Lumbwa especially distinguished themselves by their brisk recruiting for the King's African Rifles and Police. Not less admirable in another way had been the conduct of the natives of the Vanga district in the Coast Provinces of British East Africa. Their homes were situated in the worst danger spot of the whole Protectorate, at the point where the sea frontier and the German frontier met. Here they were almost isolated, and when the expected German invasion really came, they abandoned the homes which they were unable to defend, but remained loyal and rejected all overtures for their return. It was also noticed that the war seemed to have greatly improved the feeling of the usually turbulent Mahomedans of the Coast Provinces: for they became conspicuously law-abiding and so remained throughout the years of war. Indeed, generally speaking, all the natives of all the eastern Protectorates exhibited the same phenomenon of increased loyalty in proportion to their

exposure to peril that was noticed in West Africa. Just as in the Gold Coast German intrigue had been able to cause nothing worse than village fights on the Anglo-French frontier, far removed from the danger zone, and in Nigeria "fetish" disturbances among the pagans of the interior were all that rewarded enemy efforts, so in British East Africa the only troubles which arose during the years of war, necessitating some diversion of the Protectorate military and police for their suppression, were disturbances in Jubaland among the Somalis on the Italian frontier.

As was the case elsewhere, too, the resolute decision of British East Africa was taken in spite of many causes for anxiety. The Protectorate had only recently emerged from a condition of State-aided impecuniosity and in the first year of war the operations in Jubaland



MASAI CHIEFS.

had caused a very large excess in military expenditure. There was a decrease of more than one-third in the shipping. The Uganda railway traffic was interrupted by military requirements and reduced by the stoppages of trade with German East Africa. The export trade in grain was stopped, partly by high freights and partly by railway difficulties, but chiefly by the local demand for food for the





TRAINED NATIVE TROOPS IN EAST AFRICA.

troops. The soda industry from Lake Magadi, for which a special railway had been built, came to an end because the European staff had gone to the war. The demand for mineral leases ceased. There was no revenue from licences in the Southern Game Reserve, because that locality "unfortunately became the scene of military operations"; and—one of those little things which showed how special trades at home were often handicapped during the war by the impossibility of obtaining some small but important ingredient of manufacture—the mica concessions were idle through lack of skilled European supervision. Similar want of staff, owing to the R.E. officers returning to active service, brought the Government's Trigonometrical and Topographical Surveys to an abrupt halt: and on the top of all these war-burdens it may be supererogation to pile the added weight of a slump in ostrich feathers.

But every small item counts in the case of an administration which has only just attained the dignity of having, so to speak, its own pocket money to spend; and even such obviously wise concessions of revenue as the remission of fees from natives under the "Death Duties (Killed in War) Ordinance" seemed matters of serious expense. But, as we have noticed elsewhere, Bacon's wise apothegm regarding the self-neutralizing effects of sudden innovations, seemed peculiarly applicable to almost all the troubles which

the war brought to British Colonies. Of all the clouds depicted above as gathering round the British East African Ship of State on what was almost her maiden voyage in the troubled sea of independent finance, not one but had its silver lining. The shipping that did not come was doing its work for the Navy which made the Protectorate's coast secure; the stoppage of goods traffic with German territory was opportune in so far as it freed the railway for military needs: the congested wheat market was a ready store for the needs of the troops; the suspension of Government Survey work not only set the R.E. officers free for active service but also enabled the native staff to concentrate its energies on the much-needed work of map-making for the military authorities: the stock of hides and skins usually bought by Germany found Allied purchasers in Italy; South African beer took the place of German beer, and British manufacturers were active and generally successful in providing good substitutes for other German goods. The course of trade had indeed gone far by the end of 1917 to prepare the native mind, by the end of the war, for the thought: "We have done quite well without Germany all these years; what need is there for Germany in our business in future?" This was exactly the converse of the lesson which Germany set out to teach: and therefore, although they were not mentioned in military dispatches, the bloodless defeats inflicted upon German





COLES' SCOUTS: INDIANS, SOMALIS, MASAI AND LOYAL NORTH LANCASHIRES.

ambitions in the interior of each British colony were among the most significant of the war.

In these respects, as in others—except in the absence of a sea-frontier with its alarms at first and its advantages later—the experiences and the achievements of the Uganda Protectorate were a replica on a somewhat smaller scale of those of British East Africa. Every available male of the European population joined the Army; and the natives, in addition to their share in the ranks of the King's African Rifles, formed irregular troops for the local fighting, and also sent 40,000 carriers to the aid of the British and Belgian forces in German East Africa. From the point of view of material interests the crisis had come at a most unfortunate moment, just when a Uganda "boom" was maturing, which would have lifted the Protectorate out of its impecunious State-aided condition. Trade had been active; both imports and exports were rising rapidly; land in unopened districts was in demand. Then came the crash. All local industries were affected, trade was disorganized, traffic by ocean, rail and Victoria Nyanza was dislocated. But the country rose to its full height to fight the invader. European and native Defence Forces were mobilized, and the Uganda Volunteer Reserve was called out on August 5. Martial law was proclaimed on August 10. Native levies were raised and mobilized with fine rapidity. Under the

guidance of their chiefs the Baganda, Banyoro and other tribes—whose carriers afterwards displayed magnificent pluck and reliability under fire in German East Africa—helped the authorities in recruiting troops and organizing food supplies. And after the first year of war trade began to revive again, the general decrease being partly counteracted by an abnormal demand for some things, such as oil; while the rise in prices helped the customs revenue, and the absence of officials of all departments on military service facilitated a large decrease of expenditure. Meanwhile the attitude of the natives was perfect. Chiefs and people gave unstinted help in labour, food and the maintenance of roads, although officials could go little on tour to see that the work was done. There were no disturbances, and all subscribed to war charities and offered personal service. It was a fine testimony to the success and popularity of British rule and it also showed that the German menace was understood and that absolute confidence was felt in British victory. The third year of war saw more marked improvement. Although agriculture still suffered severely from the absence of European planters, the loss of labour and the scarcity of freight, British Empire trade had replaced that of Germany and Austria, and the revenue both from imports and exports showed a large increase.

The record of Nyasaland is almost identical with the foregoing, except that this Protec-



torate had to face a double danger from German aggression, on Lake Nyasa as well as across the land frontier. All traffic on the Lake was stopped until August 14, 1914, when the German gunboat Hermann von Wissman was engaged and disabled by H.M.S. Guendolen, thus bringing the brief inland naval war to a victorious close: but on land it was not until September 9 that Karonga was relieved

after its gallant defence against superior German forces, and some time later the complete defeat of the Germans at Kasoa reduced the war so far as Nyasaland was concerned to a mere affair of outposts on the frontier, leaving the Protectorate free to use all its strength in support of the main British campaign in German East Africa. For this purpose the heavy calls made upon all districts for carriers



A STREET IN ZANZIBAR.



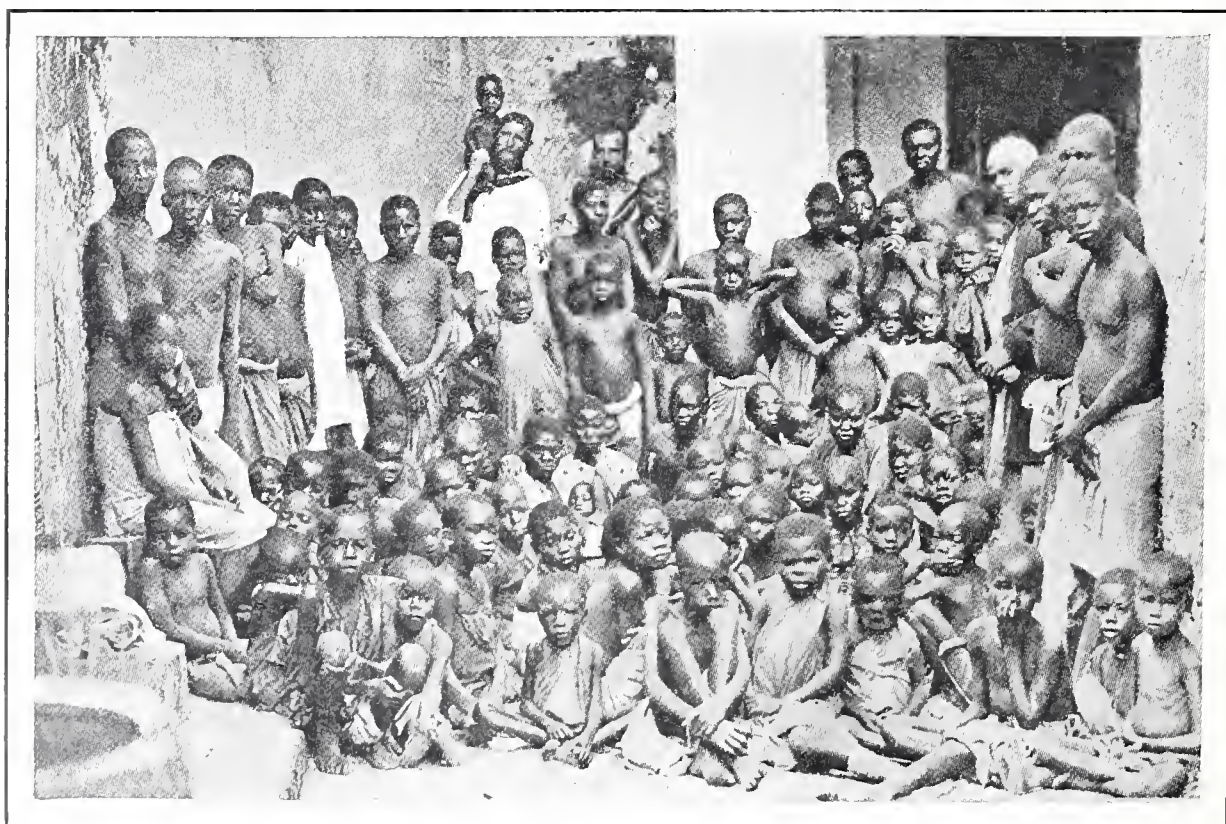


#### WAVELL'S ARAB SCOUTS.

Recruited from the Arabs of the African coast.

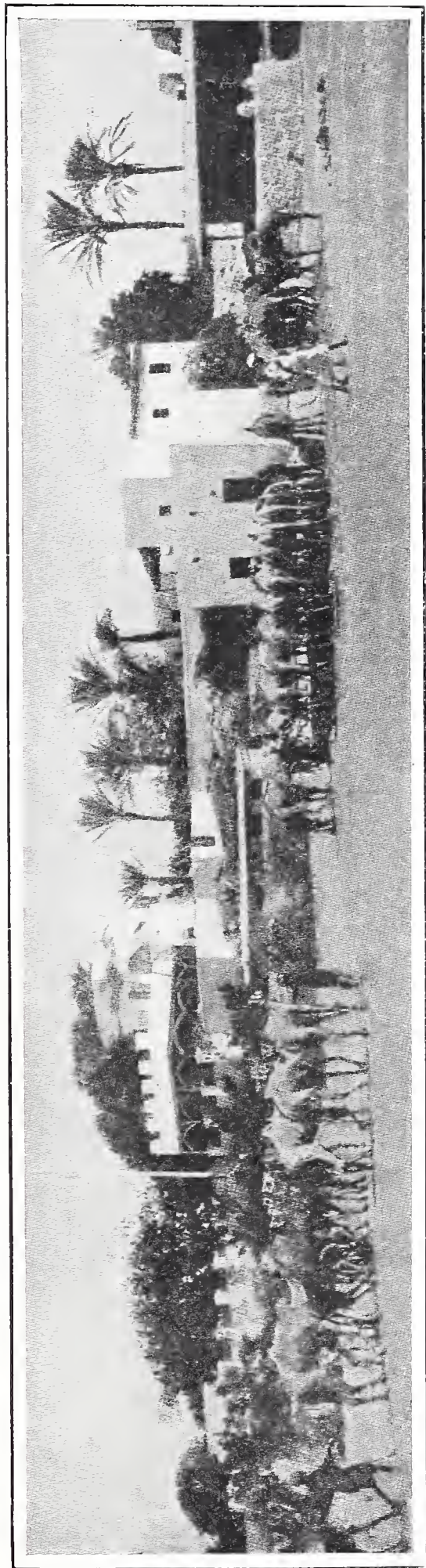
were splendidly met, and meanwhile, as in British East Africa, the natives remained entirely loyal and peaceable, and trade learned to run in new channels, although agriculture suffered severely. One item in the trade of

Nyasaland deserves especial notice in connexion with the war—namely, that in the early part of 1914–15, before hostilities were anticipated on the British side, Germany took an abnormal quantity of tobacco, almost



LIBERATED SLAVES IN NYASALAND.





ASSEMBLING CAMELS IN SOMALILAND.

trebling in four months her previous total for twelve. In view of the subsequent shortage of tobacco, which compelled the Germans to resort to beech-leaves for their Army, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that these immensely increased purchases during the months immediately preceding the declaration of war had a sinister significance unsuspected at the time.

Besides these three Protectorates, the British possessions in East Africa included Zanzibar and Somaliland: and the former, with its neighbouring island of Pemba, suffered more than the mainland territories in the early days of the war from the danger of German raiders, situated as it was close to the coast of German territory. For two months everything in Zanzibar was at a standstill, but the arrival of British warships and the subsequent hemming in of the *Königsberg* in Rufiji River, mended matters considerably. Meanwhile the administration had not been idle. It raised efficient local forces for its own defence, and also later sent large numbers of carriers, stretcher-bearers, and recruits for the combatant forces operating in German East Africa. It was significant of the way in which all classes worked together that of two detachments of carriers sent to the front one was recruited and commanded by the Bishop of Zanzibar and the other by the Minister of Education. Altogether over 5,000 natives were thus supplied from the islands, in addition to 1,000 Seedece boys recruited for the Navy. Trade, of course, suffered more in Zanzibar than elsewhere, even after all fear of German raiders had vanished, partly because its insular position doubled the handicap of the shortage of freights, and partly because before the war much of it had been in German hands and a large proportion of the remainder had been transacted with German territory. Zanzibar had special troubles, too, especially in the labour question, which was acute before war broke out and became, of course, increasingly difficult afterwards, when so many men had been taken for military purposes. The war also had entirely put an end to the organized elephant shooting upon which Zanzibar depended for its revenue from ivory. Nevertheless, it was able to make increasing contributions which amounted to £66,000 in 1916, besides setting apart nearly £20,000 in that year for local defences. In the same year generous support was given to the various

war funds, including £2,000 by public subscription to the Red Cross. Loyalty was, of course, the chief factor which rendered these achievements possible ; but, as elsewhere, the progress of the war brought about many readjustments of trade : and the revenue showed increases which were encouraging, although, of course, part of them were directly connected with the military and naval operations. Even so, however, as in the case of the supply of gun mountings and the repair of damaged vessels for the Navy, the benefit derived by Zanzibar was shared by the forces of the Empire.

Somaliland, rent by internal troubles which

had no connexion with the war, but might have seemed sufficient to put it out of the war reckoning, not only managed to maintain order within itself and to recruit a large contingent for service in German East Africa, but also supplied, in addition, several thousand camels, which proved very useful against the Turks. And this brief record of the facts cannot close more fitly than with a brief quotation from the words used by the Somalis themselves in their petition to the King to be allowed to fight in the Great War :

“Day is as night and night is as day until we hear that the English are victorious. God knows the right, God will help the right.”

END OF VOLUME SIXTEEN.



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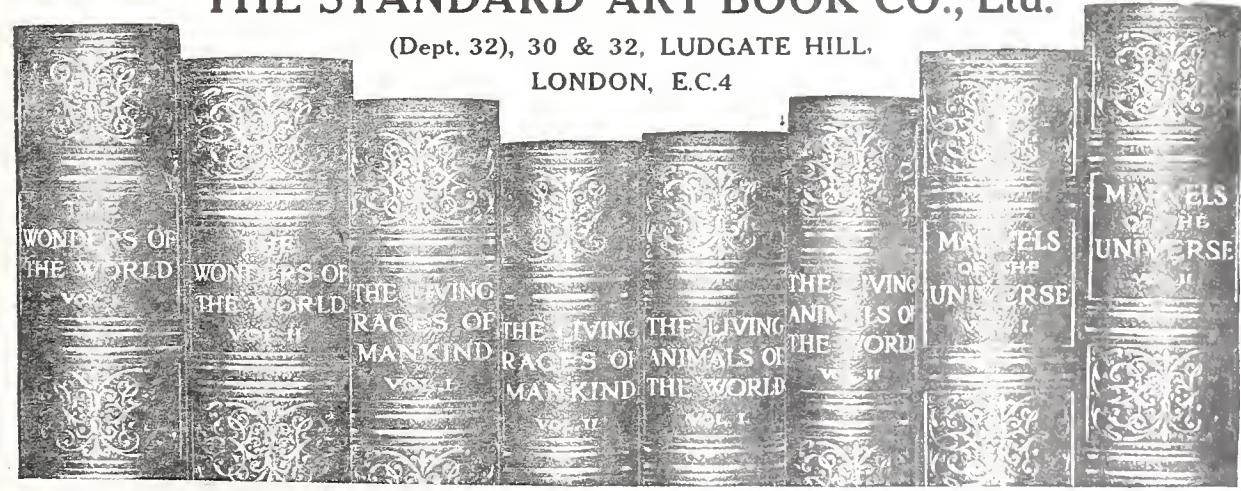
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